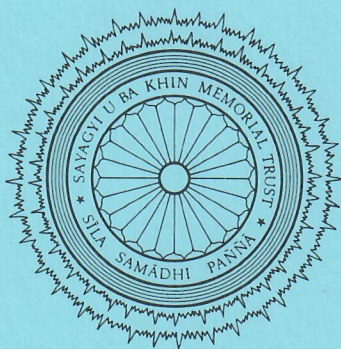


BUDDHIST MEDITATION AND THE FACTORS LEADING TO AWAKENING

(based on Venerable Ledi Sayadaw's
BODHIPAKKHIYA-DĪPAṆĪ)



by
Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja
Sayagyi U Chit Tin

Published by
The International Meditation Centres
In the Tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin
Dhamma Texts Series 2

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**Edited by
William Pruitt, Ph.D.**

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the 25th anniversary of the demise of
Sayagyi U Ba Khin (Thray Sithu)*

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BUDDHIST MEDITATION: THREE TEACHERS OF MYANMAR

Venerable Ledi Sayadaw (Dec. 1, 1846–June 27, 1923) was one of the leading Buddhist scholars of his day. He was also instrumental in reawakening interest in practising Buddhist meditation. Many of the traditions being taught today can be traced back to him. One of his meditation students was a layman named Saya Thet Gyi, who taught Sayagyi U Ba Khin. Sayagyi U Ba Khin established the International Meditation Centre in Yangon, where many foreign students came to learn how to put the Teachings of the Buddha into practice. Today, this tradition has spread all over the world, with centres now established in the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States, and Austria, and groups formed in Canada, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Singapore, Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, and Italy.

Sayagyi U Ba Khin always put the main emphasis on the practical side of Buddhism. But an understanding of the theoretical aspects are also important—especially after a meditation student has begun to work seriously. During the ten-day meditation courses in this tradition, talks are given by the teachers to help the students acquire a better understanding of what happens during the training. The writings of Ven. Ledi Sayadaw are used extensively in these talks, for he was exceptionally well educated in the Buddhist texts of the canon (the *Tiṭṭakas*) and the com-

mentaries. And he knew how to relate the Teachings to the practice.

THE MEDITATION TECHNIQUE

The talks given here have been mainly based on one of the many manuals (*dīpanī*) written by Ven. Ledi Sayadaw. The original text gives a broad discussion of the practice. The Buddha taught many techniques of meditation, however, and students in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin are working on only one of these. So we have limited our discussion to those points that are pertinent to our tradition. We hope that the talks will be useful to others who are interested in Buddhist meditation, and that by publishing them, many students of Buddhist meditation will be helped in their work.

The students listening to these talks are practising the development of a concentrated mind through mindfulness of the in-breath and out-breath (*ānāpāna-sati*) and the development of insight (*vipassanā-bhāvanā*) through observing the impermanence of the physical sensations in the body.¹ For ten days, they reside at the meditation site, keeping either five or eight precepts of moral conduct.² Distractions are kept to a minimum, as meals are provided, and the students keep talking to a minimum through observing “noble silence.”

¹ See pp. 20f.

² The five precepts are to refrain from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct (on courses, this means complete celibacy), from lying, and from taking drugs or intoxicants. The eight precepts include these five and add three more: abstaining from eating after noon; from dancing, singing, music, unseemly shows, the use of garlands, perfumes, unguents, and things that tend to beautify and adorn the body; and from the use of high and luxurious seats.

The technique of meditation is deceptively simple. To develop concentration, the students sit with backs and heads straight and with the eyes gently closed. They strive to keep the body and mind calm, and work to keep their minds fixed on each in-breath, each out-breath, and the spot where the breath touches below the nose. They soon discover that the mind is very hard to control, and that this simple task demands a great deal of effort. The effort cannot be forced, it must be balanced effort if good results are to be obtained.

The technique for developing insight involves using the concentration developed in observing the breath. Once a certain degree of concentration has been reached, the student observes physical sensations throughout the body in a systematic fashion. Here, too, the mind must be well balanced. The object is to observe the sensations as objectively as possible. The mind must be equanimous if the sensations are to be understood properly. In this way, the student is able to experience each sensation as impermanent. With practice, a student eventually gains insight into the true nature of his or her own body and mind.

The objective in Buddhist meditation is the end of the suffering (*dukkha*) of conditioned existence. The meditator is working to go beyond the world of cause and effect and reach the state which is non-conditioned. This is what is known in the Pāli language as Nibbāna (Sanskrit: Nirvana). It is not necessary for a student to accept all of the theory to benefit from this practice, however. Many students in the Sayagyi U Ba Khin tradition come from different religious backgrounds. They are not asked to give up their beliefs before starting meditation. They are only asked to follow the instructions—for these instructions do not conflict with their religious beliefs. Through personal experience,

the students will be able to see whether the practice is beneficial or not.

THE TRADITION OF THE TEACHERS

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw (1846-1923)¹

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw was born in 1846,² in Saing-pyin village, Dipeyin Township in the Shwebo district, which is to the north of Mandalay. At that time, Upper Burma was still under the rule of the Myanmar kings. His father's name was U Tun Tha and his mother was Daw Kyone. He was named Maung Tet Khaung.³

He received a traditional education. In the villages, this meant going to the monastery school where the bhikkhus (monks) taught the children the alphabet and how to read and write. They also learned to recite many Pāli texts. At that time, the level of literacy was higher in Myanmar than in Western countries. When the British took over Myanmar as a colony, they were very impressed by the level of education in the country.

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw began studying under Sayadaw U Nanda at the age of ten. When he was fifteen, he ordained as a

¹This short biography is based on information published with the *Manuals of Buddhism* and on a talk given at the International Meditation Centre, Yangon, by Sayagyi U Tint Yee. This talk was based on a biography of Ven. Ledi Sayadaw published in the Myanmar language (Burmese).

²He was born on Tuesday, the 13th day of the waxing moon of the month of Nattaw in the year 1208 of the Burmese Era (Dec. 1, 1846).

³It is the tradition in Myanmar to approach an astrologer whenever a baby is born. In this case, Sayagyi U Kyaw Hla, a well-known poet-astrologer was approached, and he gave this name to suit the auspicious phenomenon that occurred at the time the baby was born: a shooting star rose up from the foot of the house's ridge post to the topmost part of the roof foretelling his future reputation.

sāmaṇera (novice) under the same Sayadaw and took the name of Ñāṇa-dhaja (“the banner of knowledge”). As a *sāmaṇera*, he studied Pāḷi grammar and the Buddhist texts including the *Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha*, a commentary that serves as a general introduction to the *Abhidhamma* section of the canon. He then went on to study the *Abhidhamma* texts themselves.

In those days, before the introduction of electric lights, the *sāmaṇeras* and *bhikkhus* studied the written texts during the day and recited from memory after dark. Working in this way, Ven. Ledi Sayadaw mastered such texts as the *Dhātukathā* (Discourse on Elements), the *Paṭṭhāna* (Conditional Relations), and the *Yamaka* (Pairs).

In 1866, at the age of twenty, he took the higher ordination to become a *bhikkhu* under Salin Sayadaw U Paṇḍicca. Three years later, he went to Mandalay, which was the most important centre of learning in Myanmar. There, he studied under several of the leading Sayadaws and some of the leading lay scholars. He studied in the Maṅgala monastery under Ven. San-Kyaung Sayadaw.

At this period, King Mindon (ruled 1853-1878) organized the Fifth Buddhist Council, which was held in Mandalay in 1871. The main purpose of this Council was to edit the Buddhist texts. These texts were carved on 729 marble slabs which stand today at the foot of Mandalay Hill, surrounding the Kathodaw Pagoda. Ven. Ledi Sayadaw helped with editing and translating parts of the *Abhidhamma*.

During his studies, Ven. San-kyaung Sayadaw gave an exam of twenty questions for two thousand students. Only Ven. Ledi Sayadaw was able to answer them satisfactorily. His answers were published later (in 1880) under the title *Pāramī-dīpanī*

("The Manual of Perfections"). This was the first of many books to be published in Pāli and the Myanmar language by Ven. Ledi Sayadaw.

Under the last Myanmar king, Thibaw (ruled 1878-1885), Ven. Ledi Sayadaw became a Pāli teacher at the Mahā-Jotikārama monastery in Mandalay. In 1882, he went to Monywa, a city on the Chindwin River to the north-west of Mandalay. This was to become his permanent residence. There, he taught the *sāmaṇeras* and bhikkhus the Pāli canon.

In 1885, the British conquered Upper Myanmar, and King Thibaw was sent in exile to India. A year later, Ven. Ledi Sayadaw went into retreat into a forest to the north of Monywa. The forest was named Ledi forest. After a time, many bhikkhus came, requesting that he teach them. A monastery was founded and named Ledi-tawya monastery. He took the title by which he is best known in the West from this monastery: Ledi Sayadaw ("the venerable teacher from Ledi").¹

It was later, in 1897, that his main works began to be published. In that year, his "Manual of Ultimate Truth" (*Paramattha-dīpanī*) was published in Pāli. This was a commentary on the Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha. In this work, Ven. Ledi Sayadaw corrects some mistakes he found in the existing commentary on that work (Abhidhammattha-vibhāvanī). This led to some controversy, as the older commentary was used by many of the

¹His full title in Pāli was: Ledi Arañña-vihāra vāsī Mahāthera ("The Great Elder dwelling in the monastery in Ledi forest"). The title "Sayadaw" ("venerable teacher") was originally accorded to important Theras ("Elders"—a title given to bhikkhus ten years after their ordination) who taught the king. The term was later given to highly respected bhikkhus in general.

bhikkhus in studying the Abhidhamma, but eventually, Ven. Ledi Sayadaw's corrections were accepted.

After writing several more books in Pāli, Ven. Ledi Sayadaw began to publish books in the Myanmar language, including his own translation of his "Manual of Ultimate Meaning." He wrote his texts in the Myanmar language, using a simple language that made it easy for lay people to understand. He said that he wished to write in such a way that a farmer could read his works. Before that time, very few books on Buddhist subjects were written in such a way that lay people could understand them. Even when teaching, the bhikkhus would often recite long passages in Pāli, then translate them word for word, and it was difficult for the listeners to follow.

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw also wrote many works in verse, as this made it easier for lay people to memorize them. In answering questions sent him by Mrs. Rhys Davids of the Pali Text Society, Ven. Ledi Sayadaw said, "I have written a book called *Paramattha-saṅkhepa* (a Burmese translation of the Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha in verse form) that even young girls can learn easily in four or five months. Another book, *Sadda-saṅkhepa*, also in verse, helps a beginner to learn Pāli in five or six months. My *Vinaya-saṅkhepa*, again in verse, helps the bhikkhus to learn the rules and duties of a bhikkhu in two-months' time."¹

In the *Manuals of Buddhism*, seventy-six manuals, commentaries, essays, and letters written by Ven. Ledi Sayadaw are listed. His texts were all based on the Pāli texts. He never went beyond what is contained in the Teachings of the Buddha as approved by the Theravāda Buddhist Councils.

¹This letter, dated 1917, is in the Pali Text Society archives.

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw was also influential in the West. A discussion of the Yamaka book of the Abhidhamma, which he wrote in Pāḷi, was published in an appendix to the Pali Text Society edition in 1913. A partial translation of his text was published in the *Journal of the Pali Text Society* (1913-1914) under the title "Some Points in Buddhist Doctrine." As so many of his texts, it was written in answer to questions sent to him. In answering Mrs. Rhys Davids' questions, he uses a pun on her name in addressing her as "the London Devī of the texts" (*Landana-pāḷi-devī*). A discussion of the Paṭṭhāna, entitled "On the Philosophy of Relations," was also published in the same journal (1915-1916). U Shwe Zan Aung, who collaborated with Mrs. Rhys Davids on the translation of the Kathāvatthu (*Points of Controversy*, first published in 1915), referred many questions to Ven. Ledi Sayadaw.

Finally, the *Niyāma-dīpanī* ("The Manual of Cosmic Order") was first published in partial translation in the *Buddhist Review* (1915-1916). This text was written especially for Westerners, and a complete translation of it is included in the *Manuals of Buddhism*. Ven. Ledi Sayadaw was aided in his contacts with the West by the Society for Promoting Buddhism in Foreign Countries, which was founded in Myanmar in 1913.

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw was honoured for his contributions to Buddhism. In 1911, the British Government of India, which ruled over Myanmar, awarded him the highest honour given under them to bhikkhus: Agga-mahā-paṇḍita ("a scholar of the highest order"). Later, he was given an honorary doctorate (D.Litt.) by the Governor General in a ceremony held at Yangon University.

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw travelled to Bodhagaya in India to visit the place where the Buddha was Awakened. A poem written in the Myanmar language about the important events in the life of the Buddha as related to the seven days of the week is still well known and learned by children in Myanmar.

He gave many classes in studying the texts and in meditation on trips throughout Myanmar. Several meditation centres founded by him are still functioning in Myanmar. Towards the end of his life, Ven. Ledi Sayadaw had trouble with his eyesight due to the poor lighting he had had for many years when reading and writing. At the age of seventy-three he went blind. It was when he was blind that he devoted all his time to teaching and practising meditation. He died in 1923, at the age of seventy-eight, after spending fifty-eight years as a bhikkhu.

Saya Thet Gyi (1873-1945)¹

Saya Thet Gyi was born in 1873 in a farming family in the village of Pyawbwegyi, which is across the Yangon River from the city of Yangon. He was a devout Buddhist even as a child. He went to school for only six years, as he needed to work to help support his family. He began to practise meditation in a casual way under a lay teacher named Saya Nyunt.

He married and had a son and daughter, but one year there was an outbreak of cholera and Saya Thet Gyi lost five members of his family, including his two children. This led him to go to

¹*Saya* means *teacher* and the *-gyi* added to his name might be translated “the great Thet.” He would be addressed in this way only after becoming a meditation teacher himself, but for the sake of consistency, we have referred to him at all periods of his life with the same title. His name as a young man was Maung (“master”) Po Thet.

many of the Sayadaws and lay teachers, seeking a way out of suffering and death.

Around 1903, he followed the example of his first meditation teacher, U Nyunt, and went to Monywa to practise meditation under Ven. Ledi Sayadaw. He was around thirty years old then. He was accompanied in his search by a companion. While he was away, his wife and sister-in-law looked after his rice fields and sent money to support him. He was away for thirteen years. The first year or two, he would return to the village to see his wife and friends, but after that, he worked without pause.

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw taught Saya Thet Gyi *ānāpāna* meditation and explained about *vipassanā*. His main work was on mindfulness of the breath. After working for thirteen years, he decided to return to his native town. When he took leave of Ven. Ledi Sayadaw, his teacher told him, “You should continue practising and strengthen your concentration (*samādhi*). When concentration comes, the factor of wisdom (*paññā*) will come too. Once the factor of wisdom comes, you will be able to spread the Teaching (Dhamma).”

Back in his native town, he and his companion stayed at a Dhamma Hall. Saya Thet Gyi did not even go to see his wife, but continued to meditate. His wife and sister-in-law would not go to see him because they thought he should have come to see them first.

Saya Thet Gyi continued meditating for a year, and one day, he made significant progress in his work. He could not consult Ledi Sayadaw directly, but he knew that the books written by his teacher were at his home, so he decided to go back to his house in order to consult these texts. His sister-in-law saw him coming to the house and tried to get her younger sister to snub him. But

when he arrived at the house, the sister-in-law's attitude changed and she was the first to greet Saya Thet Gyi and invite him for tea.

Saya Thet Gyi continued living at the Dhamma Hall, explaining to his wife that she should consider him as a brother. His wife and sister-in-law meditated under his guidance and supported him for the rest of his life. Through his family's generosity, he was able to cover all the expenses of those who meditated under him. For some people, he was even able to cover their daily wages when they missed work.

After teaching others for about a year, Saya Thet Gyi returned to visit Ven. Ledi Sayadaw. He explained his experiences. Ven. Ledi Sayadaw approved of his progress and told him he should not speak of this to others, but he should observe his mind and mental activity for eight years to see whether the negative qualities were truly rooted out rather than just held in abeyance.

Then Ven. Ledi Sayadaw said, "You can now teach meditation on my behalf. As a first step, you can teach some of my bhikkhus. Then you must spread the practical aspects of *vipassanā* meditation to at least six thousand people."

When he returned home, he thought that to accomplish this mission he should travel around Myanmar. But his sister-in-law said, "You have a Dhamma Hall here. We can support you in your work by preparing food and so forth for the students. Why not stay here and teach? There are many people who want to practise *vipassanā* meditation and who will come." So he stayed there in his home town.

Sayagyi U Ba Khin (1899-1971)

Sayagyi U Ba Khin first heard of Saya Thet Gyi in 1936. By that time, Saya Thet Gyi had been teaching meditation for around twenty years. A friend of Sayagyi's named U Aye Maung said that he was going to Saya Thet Gyi to learn meditation in December, 1936. When he came back on Jan 1, 1937, Sayagyi asked him about the technique. U Aye Maung explained *ānāpāna* meditation and Sayagyi tried it. They were both surprised when Sayagyi saw the mental reflection of lights, which is an indication of good concentration, the very first time he meditated.

Sayagyi took leave from his job in the Accountant General's office in Yangon, where he worked as an accountant, and went to do his first meditation course with Saya Thet Gyi. It was very difficult to go to Saya Thet Gyi's place in January. For part of the trip, Sayagyi had to wade through knee-deep mud. But he persevered, and made dramatic progress in his first course of one week. Usually, Saya Thet Gyi would have his students do *ānāpāna* meditation for a week, but Sayagyi's progress in concentration was so fast, he had him begin *vipassanā* meditation after the first day. Later, Saya Thet Gyi advised some of his students in Yangon to consult Sayagyi whenever they had questions about their meditation.

In 1945, after his wife's death, Saya Thet Gyi set aside fifty acres of his rice fields so that the proceeds could support the Dhamma Hall where he had taught, and he divided the rest of his belongings among his nephews and nieces. He then went to Yangon and stayed on the northern slopes of the Shwedagon Pagoda, meditating in some bomb shelters there. He died that

same year and was cremated where he had resided. Sayagyi U Ba Khin had a pagoda built on public land on the northern slopes of the Shwedagon Pagoda where Saya Thet Gyi had meditated.

Sayagyi U Ba Khin had begun to actively teach meditation in 1941, after being told to do so by the bhikkhu who was widely believed in Myanmar to be an Arahāt, Ven. Webu Sayadaw. Sayagyi was named Accountant General of Myanmar when the country gained independence from Great Britain on Jan. 4, 1948. In 1951, he founded the Vipassanā Association and the Vipassanā Research Association in his office, and he taught meditation in a special room he had set up there. The next year, the Vipassanā Association acquired land in a residential section of Yangon and founded the International Meditation Centre. Sayagyi taught at the centre until his death on January 19, 1971.

Sayagyi U Ba Khin's accomplishments are too numerous to give in detail. Not only did he teach meditation, but he also held many high-level government posts. We have noted that Ven. Ledi Sayadaw participated in the Fifth Buddhist Council. Sayagyi U Ba Khin helped plan the Sixth Buddhist Council. (Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana), which was held in 1954-1956. He was an Executive Member of the Union of Burma Buddha Sāsana Council and the Honorary Auditor of the Council. He also served on several sub-committees.

Many foreigners came to Myanmar for the Sixth Council. There were many meditation centres established in Myanmar by that time, including those set up by students of Ven. Ledi Sayadaw and Saya Thet Gyi. But Sayagyi was one of the few teachers with a good command of English. So when Westerners asked about meditation, they were referred to the International Meditation Centre in Yangon.

Over the years, there were many Westerners who meditated under Sayagyi's guidance. His goal was to maintain the purity of the Buddha's Teachings in Myanmar and abroad, to revive the Sāsana (Dispensation) in its land of origin, and to spread the Dhamma to lands where it had only been seen as a glimmer before. A few years before his death, he authorized a number of people to teach outside Myanmar. Today, there are five International Meditation Centres outside Myanmar: one in the United Kingdom, two in Australia, one in Austria, and one in the United States. Groups in many other countries regularly organize ten-day courses as well.¹

In order to give an idea of the benefits that can be obtained through Buddhist meditation, let us close with a quote from Sayagyi U Ba Khin's lectures, *What Buddhism Is*:²

When I say, Life is suffering, as the Buddha taught, please be so good as not to run away with the idea that, if that is so, life is miserable, life is not worth living, and that the Buddhist concept of suffering is a terrible concept which will give you no chance of a reasonably happy life. What is happiness? For all that science has achieved in the field of materialism, are the people of the world happy? They may find sensual pleasure off and on, but in their heart of hearts they are not happy concerning what has happened, what is happening, and what

¹Information concerning meditation courses can be obtained from the addresses on the back cover.

²First printed in Myanmar in 1951. The lectures are included with Sayagyi's other writings in English in the book *Dhamma Texts* published by the Sayagyi U Ba Khin Memorial Trust, U.K., in 1985. We quote from p. 17 of that edition.

may happen next. Why? This is because, while man has mastery over matter, he is still lacking in mastery over his mind.

Pleasure born of sensuality is nothing compared with the *pīti* (or rapture) born of the inner peace of mind which can be secured through a process of Buddhist meditation. Sense pleasures are preceded and followed by troubles and pains, as in the case of a rustic who finds pleasure in cautiously scratching the itches over his body, whereas *pīti* is free from such troubles and pains either way. It will be difficult for you, looking from a sensuous field, to appreciate what that *pīti* is like. But I know you can enjoy it and have a taste of it for comparative evaluation. There is therefore nothing to the supposition that Buddhism teaches something that will make you feel miserable with the nightmare of suffering. But please take it from me that it will give you an escape from the normal conditions of life, a lotus, as it were, in a pond of crystal water immune from its fiery surroundings. It will give you that Peace Within which will satisfy you that you are getting not only beyond the day-to-day troubles of life, but slowly and surely beyond the limitation of life, suffering, and death.

**A NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR,
SAYAGYI U CHIT TIN (SADDHAMMA JOTIKA DHAJA)**

Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja Sayagyi U Chit Tin and his wife Mahā Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja Sayamagyi Daw Mya Thwin are the eminent disciples of Sayagyi U Ba Khin who both learned Vipassanā meditation under their teacher beginning in 1950–51. They both served their teacher from 1953 until his death in January 1971, helping and assisting in teaching Myanmar nationals and foreigners who came to the International Meditation Centre (IMC), Yangon, Myanmar. After Sayagyi U Ba Khin's demise, Sayagyi U Chit Tin and Sayamagyi Daw Mya Thwin continued to teach the Dhamma at IMC-Yangon until 1978. They left Myanmar in October 1978, after being invited to teach in the West. They settled in the United Kingdom, founding IMC-UK in 1979. To date, they have established five International Meditation Centres, the four others being: IMC-Western Australia, IMC-Eastern Australia, IMC-USA, and IMC-Austria. Each centre has a Dhamma Yaung Chi Ceti (Light of the Dhamma Pagoda) based on the same design as the original Dhamma Yaung Chi Ceti at IMC-Yangon.

U Chit Tin joined the Accountant General's office in 1950 as Divisional Accountant working under his teacher Sayagyi U Ba Khin. He was promoted and transferred to the Union Buddha Sāsana Council in 1952 as Chief Accountant. Thray Sithu Sayagyi U Ba Khin was an Executive Member and the Honorary

Auditor of the Council while serving as the first Accountant General after Myanmar (then called Burma) gained independence in 1948.

Preparations for the Sixth Buddhist Synod began in late 1952, and they gained momentum in 1953, as the opening date in May 1954 (Buddha's Day) grew near. Sayagyi U Ba Khin and U Chit Tin, among others, were both busy and fully occupied with the biggest project of that time: serving as host to all the Buddhist countries of Thailand, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and Laos.

In addition to his duties as Chief Accountant, U Chit Tin was given the duties of printing and publishing all the edited Tipiṭaka Pāli Texts, Commentaries, and Sub-Commentaries, both in Pāli and in Myanmar translations. The Pāli-Myanmar Dictionary,¹ the Mahā-Buddhavaṃsa,² Venerable Ledi Sayadaw's *Dīpanī*s, and several other Buddhist texts were printed at his printing press. He worked at this task from 1958 to 1978, with one break, retiring in May 1978.

In May 1956, on the Buddha Jāyanti Day, immediately after the ending of the Sixth Buddhist Synod, Sayagyi U Chit Tin was awarded the civil service title of "Wunna Kyaw Htin," and he was awarded the religious title of "Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja" in January 1996 for his services in promoting and propagating the Buddha-Dhamma, which was also the primary objective and lifetime endeavour of his Dhamma Teacher, Sayagyi U Ba Khin. The religious title is a fitting tribute to Sayagyi U Ba Khin's worldwide Dhamma mission.

¹Twenty volumes of this on-going project have been printed to date.

²A work in six volumes, two of which were printed in two parts.

THE REQUISITES OF AWAKENING, I (INTRODUCTION)

These talks are based mainly on Venerable Ledi Sayadaw's *The Requisites of Awakening*.¹ Some of the material is re-arranged and additional comments are included concerning the application of these requisites in developing concentration and insight as taught by Sayagyi U Ba Khin. The emphasis will be on the importance of making our best effort and ways in which to make the right kind of effort.

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw made very clear that no matter what our potential is for making progress towards Awakening in this lifetime, it is essential to make as much effort as we can. He also points out how serious it is if we do anything which can obstruct the Dhamma, the Buddha's Teachings.

FOUR TYPES OF INDIVIDUALS. In his introduction, Ven. Ledi Sayadaw speaks of four kinds of individuals:

- (1) those who encounter a Buddha in person and who can attain Awakening after hearing only a short discourse;
- (2) those who must have the discourse explained at some length;

¹*Bodhipakkhiya-dīpanī*, first printed in the *Light of the Dhamma* (VII, n° 1, pp. 11–19; n° 2, pp. 5–21; n° 3, pp. 15–33; n° 4, pp. 7–17). Reprinted in the *Manuals of Buddhism* (Rangoon: Union Buddha Sāsana Council Press, 1965), pp. 165–218. Also published under the title *The Requisites of Enlightenment* in the *Wheel*, n°s 171–174.

- (3) those who must practise the teachings for days, months, or years; and
- (4) those who cannot attain Awakening in their present lifetime.

People who undertake to practise the Buddha's Teachings today are in the last two categories. Those who must practise for some time in order to reach Awakening will make quicker or slower progress depending on their preparation in past lives and on the age at which they begin. The more they have worked on the perfections (see p. 9), the quicker they will progress. The earlier they begin, the further they will be able to go. The kind of effort they put forth in this life will also affect their progress. If the effort is not of the highest order, they may need seven years rather than seven days. If they do not make the necessary effort, they will miss the opportunity of obtaining release from continued birth, suffering, and death. They will have to wait until they encounter another Buddha era. Only those who have obtained sure prediction from a Buddha can be assured of obtaining release in a future existence. Even if people have received a sure prediction, making the maximum effort now will mean that when they reach their final life, they will reach the Paths and Fruition States of the four stages of Awakening all the quicker. If they are lax, then they will suffer greatly before obtaining release. No matter what type of individual we are, it is important to make the best effort we can.

Obviously, those who cannot attain Awakening during their present life should make a great effort to study and practise the Dhamma, for if they die practising concentration (*samādhi*) or insight (*vipassanā*) and obtain rebirth as a human being or *deva*

in the next existence, they will be able to obtain release during this Buddha era. If they are not able to practise concentration or insight at the moment of death, they will miss their opportunity during this Buddha era, but there is still hope, if effort has been made, that they will obtain release during the next Buddha era.

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw points out that some people excuse themselves from making an effort, saying that it is too late to obtain Awakening, or saying that people practising wrong livelihood should give up their professions before practising. Or they may say that practising morality, concentration, and insight must be developed one at a time, each step being perfected before the next step is taken. Others discourage people from making an effort, saying that if they practise wrong livelihood there is no use in their trying to practise the Dhamma, or they say that no one should become ordained as a bhikkhu unless he is able to remain a bhikkhu for the rest of his life. Some people refuse to see the dangers in the continued cycle of birth and death, or they say they are waiting until their past perfections (*pāramīs*) are mature. They may say that people born today are all in the category of those who cannot obtain Awakening. And they may put into doubt that the Buddha and the other teachers of the Dhamma ever existed.

Such thinking is very wrong as it causes an obstruction to the Dhamma (*Dhammantarāya*). It is very serious if a person does this. Even to criticize an act of generosity will have very serious consequences. For the Buddha said, “I say that the simple arising of the intention to perform good deeds is productive of great benefit.”¹ It is even more serious to discourage virtuous living,

¹*Middle Length Sayings* I 55.

developing concentration and developing wisdom. Obstructing meritorious actions such as generosity will mean that in future lives one will be without any power or influence and will be abjectly poor. Obstructing the Dhamma by discouraging the development of virtue, concentration, and insight will lead to a person's being handicapped in conduct, in behaviour, and in their senses—being blind or crippled, for example. They will be the lowest of the low.

A person who obstructs meritorious deeds or the Dhamma will therefore be very unlikely in future lives to be reborn in a plane of existence where it is possible to encounter the Buddha-Dhamma. Even if they are so fortunate, they will be unlikely to be born in a region where it can be heard. But even if this happens, they are unlikely to be able to understand it or be inclined to practise it. If they miss the next Buddha era, there will then be a large number of world cycles without any Buddhas appearing. It is inconceivable how small the chances are for such people to ever reach awakening.

There are also people today who spend their lives following traditional practices that are only imitations of the correct development of concentration and insight. Their efforts will not result in sowing the seeds of right understanding and will not bear any fruit in the future.

So we can see how important it is for us not to become overconfident or complacent. We must not be like those who say they cannot know whether their perfections are mature yet, that when the time comes, they will make the effort. We must consider that thirty years' effort now will mean a very small amount of suffering compared to the suffering we will experience if we go to the lower regions such as the hells where we may have to spend a

hundred thousand years. Thirty years' suffering in making an effort now is less than three hours' suffering in the regions of hell.

No matter what category of individual we belong to, thirty years' effort will be beneficial. Such an effort may enable us to reach Awakening in this life. If not, since every good action bears fruit, we may attain release in our next lifetime. If not, the effort to develop the mind (*bhāvanā-āciṇṇa kamma*) is very powerful and will enable us to avoid the lower regions and meet the next Buddha after continued rebirths in the happy planes of existence.

We must not miss this opportunity to develop insight. People in the human plane today have developed their concentration to very high degrees in their past existences. But concentration without insight is very unstable and the lives in the happy planes of existence which are the result of such development are unstable. People today have been laymen, hermits, or bhikkhus who developed the powers (*iddhis*) that come with the absorption states (*jhānas*). They have been born in the *brahmā* planes. But they have also been born during countless lives in the lower planes of animals, hungry ghosts (*petas*), demons (*asuras*), and in the hells. Thus, now is the time for us to acquire more than just concentration so that this unstable existence of ours will be developed to the stage of stability.

We must develop in both knowledge (*vijjā*) and conduct (*carana*). By working on morality and concentration we develop right conduct. By working on wisdom (*paññā*) we develop right knowledge (*vijjā*). Ven. Ledi Sayadaw compares knowledge to the eyes and conduct to the limbs. A person who has right morality and concentration but who lacks wisdom is like a

person with sound limbs but who is blind. A person who has wisdom but lacks morality and concentration is like a person with good eye-sight but who has defective limbs. The person with both right knowledge and right conduct is like a normal whole person. If a person has neither, he is not worthy of being called a human being.

People today who have morality and concentration but who lack knowledge are likely to encounter the next Buddha era. But because they lack the seeds of right knowledge, they will not be able to attain Awakening, even if they hear a discourse given to them personally by the next Buddha. Several such persons are mentioned as having met the Buddha Gotama. Thera Lāḷudāyi, Thera Upananda, and the Chabbaggiya bhikkhus all heard the Buddha teach many times because in their past lives they had done such good deeds as generosity and observing morality. But because they had not developed right knowledge, the teachings of the Buddha fell on deaf ears.

People who develop right knowledge such as insight into the material and mental qualities and the constituent groups of existence will attain Awakening if they meet the next Buddha. But if they lack right effort, the chances of their meeting the next Buddha are very slim. Only those whose rebirths between now and the next Buddha are in the happy planes of existence will be able to meet him. This is because one rebirth in any of the four lower realms is often followed by innumerable rebirths in one of those four realms.

A person who is rarely generous in this life, who does not control his bodily acts, who is unrestrained in his speech, and who entertains unclean thoughts, is deficient in good conduct (*carana*). There is a strong tendency for such a person to be

reborn in the lower realms. If such a person is fortunate enough to be reborn in a happy plane, due to lack of generosity, he or she will be liable to be poor and meet with hardships, trials and tribulations in earning a livelihood. Because of the lack of moral living, such a person will be prone to meet with disputes, quarrels, anger, and hatred in dealing with others. Such a person will be susceptible to diseases and ailments. All this will mean he or she is more likely to be reborn in the lower realms. Thus, painful experiences are encountered in every existence, and undesirable tendencies which prevent rebirth in the happy planes and which lead to rebirth in the lower realms are reinforced. The chances that those who lack right conduct will meet the next Buddha era are very slight indeed.

Making as much effort as possible is essential for the type of individual who can attain the Paths and Fruition States in this present life. If the conditions are met, such people will be successful. They must know what is good for them according to their age; they must discard what should be discarded; they must search for the right teacher, obtain the right guidance from the teacher, and put forth sufficient effort in order to reach their goal. If a person becomes addicted to wrong views and wrong ways of conduct, if he finds he is unable to discard sensual pleasures, he will miss his chance. But even if he avoids these pitfalls, he is not safe. He must also obtain the guidance of a good teacher and be able to make the right effort. If he is willing to make the effort but unable to actually do so because of old age, he will miss the goal. Or, if he is young but too sick to make the effort, he will not fulfil the conditions.

Those of us who practise *ānāpāna* and *vipassanā* can take such warnings as an inspiration to put forth effort and work

correctly. We have pointed out many times that the essence of these ten-day meditation courses is right conduct and insight. Right conduct meaning establishing ourselves in the moral precepts and developing concentration through *ānāpāna*. Right conduct is completed by insight, which we develop through *vipassanā*. We do not need to study in great detail every aspect of right conduct and wisdom. We have at our disposal all the theoretical knowledge we need. Our task here is to put our knowledge into practice.

Some students get discouraged because they seem to be making very little or no progress in their concentration and insight. It would be good in such cases to examine one's actions to be sure that the five precepts are kept at all times. If the base of virtue is not there, then concentration will be poor. If concentration is poor, then insight will not come. There is also another possibility. It may be necessary to work more on developing the perfections (*pāramīs*). We can make the error of putting too much emphasis on taking meditation courses, mistaking quantity for quality. When we feel little enthusiasm for meditating and have to force ourselves to carry on, this is a good indication that we may need to give some more time and energy to serving the Dhamma.

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw points out that some people cause obstruction to the Dhamma by insisting that the Pāli texts must be followed literally and each step in the practice must be perfect before one goes on to the next step. "These persons," he says, "because they do not know the nature of the present times, will lose the opportunity to attain the seeds of right knowledge which are attainable only when a Buddha Sāsana is encountered." Today we can sow these seeds if we have not done so in the past

or bring to maturity the seeds we sowed in past lives by making effort in all the areas of the perfections, virtue, concentration, and insight.

DEVELOPING THE TEN PERFECTIONS. For developing the perfections, our best guide will be the highest sort of perfections: those developed by Bodhisattas. Ashin Buddhaghosa, in the *Path of Purification*,¹ gives a very good description of how the ten *pāramīs* are best practised:

Bodhisattas' minds maintain their balance by giving preference to other beings' welfare, by dislike of the suffering of others, by desiring that the success of others endure, and by impartiality towards all beings. They give gifts (*dāna*) to all beings (without showing preference). They undertake the precepts of virtue (*sīla*) in order to avoid harming living beings. They perfect their virtue by practising renunciation (*nekkhamma*). They purify their wisdom (*paññā*) in order to understand clearly what is beneficial and what is harmful to living beings. They constantly arouse energy (*virīya*), keeping the welfare and happiness of others in mind. When they have acquired heroic fortitude through supreme energy, they become patient (*khanti*) with the many failings or shortcomings of others. Once they promise to give or do something, they do not break their promise (thus they are truthful, *sacca*). With unshakable resolution (*adhiṭṭhāna*) they work for the welfare and happiness of others. They place others before themselves through unshakable loving kindness (*mettā*).

¹Chapter IX, ¶124.

They do not expect anything in return through equanimity (*upekkhā*).

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw points out that “even though it does not reach the ultimate, no wholesome volitional action (*kusala-kamma*) is ever rendered futile. If effort is made, a wholesome volitional action is instrumental in producing *pāramī* in those who do not possess *pāramī*. If no effort is made, the opportunity to acquire *pāramī* is lost. If those whose *pāramīs* are immature put forth effort, their *pāramīs* become ripe and mature. Such persons can attain the Paths and Fruition States in their next existence within the present Sāsana. If no effort is made, the opportunity for the *pāramī* to ripen is lost. If those whose *pāramī* is ripe and mature put forth effort, the Paths and Fruition States can be attained within this life. If no effort is made the opportunity to attain the Paths and the Fruition States is lost.”

Now, how can we who are meditators best develop the *pāramīs*? The greatest gift we can give anyone is the gift of the Dhamma. So if we, in our daily lives, give an example to others through living in accord with the Dhamma, we will find that people will become interested in the Dhamma. We will look for ways to speak about the Dhamma. We will encourage others to lead moral lives, and we will encourage them to develop concentration and insight.

Some of us will be able to teach others how to meditate. Others will help those who are teaching. If you have already helped organize a course and worked on a course by managing or cooking, then you have a better idea of all the work that is necessary if meditation courses are to take place. And in doing such

work you have been directly active in helping to give the Dhamma to others.

We will find that in order to give this best of all gifts we will need to develop the other nine *pāramīs* as highly as possible. Our own virtue must be good before others will be inspired by our example. We must be able to renounce not only material things but mental defilements as well. Giving, in its simplest form, means giving up material things. Virtue means giving up actions which harm others. Through our virtue we abandon the mental defilements at the state when they become manifest through speech or bodily actions. As meditators, *ānāpāna* permits us to renounce mental defilements at the stage of obsession, when they arise to the surface of our consciousness. Through *vipassanā* we abandon them on the level of latent tendencies which lie dormant, waiting for an opportunity to manifest themselves.

In working to help others, we will be forced to face ourselves. Our latent defilements will find many occasions to come to the surface. We will have many opportunities for exercising control over the expression of unwholesome words and deeds. We will learn through doing good how our impurities prevent us from being as efficient as we might.

If we are to renounce the mental defilements, it will be necessary for us to assume responsibility for our actions: our mental activity, our speech, and our bodily actions. We must realize that we cannot hide behind excuses, blaming others or blaming circumstances when we fall short. Whenever we recognize that we do not feel generous or are inclined to break the moral precepts, we must know that the latent tendencies are coming to the surface. Similarly for the other *pāramīs*: we may want to cling to our possessions or our ideas, we may want to bury our

head in the sand rather than face reality, we may wish to give in to laziness, or we may find we lose all patience or that we are tempted to distort the truth. We may find excuses to be lax in our determination. We may give in to feelings of hatred or aversion. And in all these cases, we will find we have lost our equanimity.

Facing these limitations will mean that we will gain a better understanding of the effort we must make to eliminate our defilements. We will then be able to make right effort and progress in concentration and insight. We will gain wisdom into ways to work for the welfare of others. Renunciation will help us to concentrate better. Wisdom will help our insight and lead to greater equanimity.

We must arouse energy if we are to develop ourselves and help others. We must make a continuous effort if we are to have enough energy and presence of mind to avoid falling into our former bad habits of hiding behind excuses and self-justifications. And our energy must be balanced with patience. Through patience we avoid the restlessness that is the result of excessive activity. Through patience we learn to put up with the suffering that comes from working with others. There is also a sense in which patience aids us in our understanding. At times there may be aspects of the Dhamma which we find difficult to understand. While serving others, many situations will arise to test just how complete our understanding of the Dhamma is. Through patience, we will be able to continue our work, facing the period during which our understanding is not complete. We will be able to accept that until we are fully awakened there will be aspects of the Dhamma which we do not have immediate insight into.

When we are serving, we will often be led to make promises and will need to remain faithful to our word. Others will depend on us and we must be as truthful as we can. Determination is also very important. We must make the mental effort to resolve to put forth our best effort. When we are serving others, it will be necessary many times to re-establish ourselves in our determination to give of our time and energy and resources, to set a good example for others, to remain true to the Dhamma, and to continue in developing the *pāramīs*.

Sometimes we make the mistake of approaching the Dhamma as an all-or-nothing affair. We expect to become perfect in a very short time. Otherwise we get discouraged and give up. Patience and determination can be very helpful to us here. As long as we are not fully awakened we are bound to make mistakes. Patience will help us face ourselves, face the truth, and determination will enable us to renew our efforts. Working to help others will mean facing the fact that they too have their limitations, just as we do, and we will learn not to expect too much of others.

Loving kindness will help us in our determination to help others. It will help us overcome our resentment of others. We will be able to appreciate their good qualities. When we react to others with negative feelings such as hatred, envy, jealousy, and aversion, we are making it impossible to develop our concentration and insight. We are hurting ourselves by indulging such wrong thoughts. When we are aware that they are present, we can remind ourselves that latent defilements have now become conscious and it is the moment to let go of such defilements. Through our giving to others we help ourselves to overcome these bad feelings, for when we give, there will be at least one moment of loving kindness. Thus our minds become more

pliable, less rigid. We feel better towards others and towards ourselves. As a result the mind can remain longer on one object.

By combining equanimity with loving kindness, we will be able to purify it and avoid the tendency to defile loving kindness with sensual desire. We will develop our ability to be impartial, even towards those who do not wish us well.

Through equanimity we will be able to see impartially, we will overcome attraction and repulsion and perfect our understanding of the fact that all beings inherit the results of their own volitional actions.¹

We must be careful not to misuse the fact that each individual inherits the results of his own volitional actions. When we see someone else in difficulty, we should not just say, "That's his *kamma*. Too bad." We must see such occasions as an opportunity to develop the *pāramīs*. If we are in a position to help someone less fortunate than ourselves we should do so. It is not necessary to go out of our way to find people to help. In our day-to-day lives we are constantly in contact with people whom we can aid. By serving on meditation courses, we are helping others in the best possible way. Nothing is more helpful than becoming established in the Dhamma. We want to develop enough wisdom to distinguish between a person we can help and a person whom we cannot help. We cannot force the Dhamma on anyone. At the same time, we do not want to miss any opportunity to interest people in the Dhamma.

¹This discussion of the *pāramīs* is based in part on Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation of a long extract from the *Cariyāpīṭaka-aṭṭhakathā* in the *All-Embracing Net of Views* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1978), pp. 256–261.

RIGHT CONDUCT. Ven. Ledi Sayadaw gives fifteen aspects of right conduct (*carāṇa-dhammā*). The first is morality (*sīla*). For laymen who hope to encounter the next Buddha, this means practising the five precepts at all times and keeping the eight precepts four times a month. Those who wish to work for the Paths and Fruition States in this lifetime should practise morality ending with the practice of right livelihood (*ājīvaṭṭhamaka-sīla*). This is an elaboration of the five precepts with greater emphasis laid on abstaining from wrong speech:

1. Abstaining from taking life.
2. Abstaining from stealing.
3. Abstaining from indulging in improper sexual relations and taking intoxicants.
4. Abstaining from telling lies.
5. Abstaining from setting one person against another.
6. Abstaining from using rude and rough words.
7. Abstaining from frivolous talk.
8. Abstaining from improper livelihood.

We can all say that we have been practising this type of *sīla* during the meditation course and we can make an effort to observe these precepts in our day-to-day lives.

The next aspect of right conduct is guarding the sense-doors (*indriya-saṃvara*). The six senses are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. If we are able to control the senses, we will be able to work better. In everyday life, we are constantly in contact with sights, sounds, odours, tastes, bodily sensations, and thoughts which can distract us. If we make an effort to keep our eyes away from sights which will disturb us, which will either arouse desires or hatred, we will find that observing the precepts

and developing concentration and insight will be easier. If, on the other hand, we give free reign to our eyes, we will soon find that the mind is disturbed. We will be struggling to restrain ourselves from doing unwholesome acts. So the sooner we turn away from temptations, the more we avoid coming into contact with temptations, the more we will progress. This can be applied to all our activity: where we go, the people we associate with, what we read, the programmes we listen to on the radio or watch on TV, the movies and plays we attend. The better our understanding of reality, the less we will be inclined to associate with the wrong kinds of things. As our concentration grows we will be able to control even wrong thoughts—we will be less inclined to escape from reality by entertaining unwholesome fantasies.

The third type of right conduct is moderation in eating (*bhojana-mattannutā*). This means taking just enough food to preserve the balance of the material groups in the body and being satisfied with just enough food. Here, we must be careful to avoid extremes. If we do not eat enough, our bodies will suffer. If we are ill we will not be able to develop our minds. And we must avoid finding excuses for over-indulgence. So this type of right conduct is very useful in developing the right balance in our work.

The fourth type of right conduct is wakefulness (*jāgariyānu-yoga*). Ven. Ledi Sayadaw gives the ideal kind of wakefulness when he says that this means “not sleeping during the day, and sleeping only during one period (of the three periods) of the night while practising mental development (*bhāvanā*) during the other two periods.” This may be too difficult for us as laymen. But all the same, we can use it as our goal and begin to work on

our wakefulness. As our mental development improves we will find we are capable of remaining wakeful for longer periods.

The fifth through the eleventh types of right conduct are the seven attributes of good and virtuous men (*saddhamma*):

- (1) faith (*saddhā*),
- (2) mindfulness (*sati*),
- (3) conscience (*hiri*),
- (4) moral dread (*ottappa*),
- (5) great learning (*bāhu-sacca*),
- (6) energy (*virīya*),
- (7) wisdom (*paññā*).

Four of these will be discussed in more detail with the Thirty-Seven Requisites of Awakening. Here we will look more closely at conscience, moral dread, and great learning.

Ashin Buddhaghosa says that conscience and moral dread (*hiri-ottappa*) are the Guardians of the World.¹ Conscience means having conscientious scruples about bodily misconduct and verbal and mental misconduct. Moral dread means being ashamed of misconduct. Their proximate causes are self-respect (for conscience) and respect of others (for moral dread). They in turn are the proximate cause of virtue. When they exist, virtue arises and persists. When they do not exist, virtue neither arises nor persists. This does not mean that we should indulge in guilt feelings. Conscience, when properly developed, will lead to our being modest. It will encourage us to keep the precepts at all times. Moral dread will lead us to have more consideration for others, and thus we will shrink from doing anything which will

¹ *Path of Purification*, Chapter XIV, ¶142.

bring harm to them. When these two qualities are lacking there is no more virtue possible. We can see in the world around us today that many people are deficient in these two qualities which are always present in wholesome consciousness. If we are not careful we will find ourselves becoming immodest and disregarding the welfare of others.

Great learning refers to the sort of intellectual knowledge concerning the Dhamma which stops short of direct insight. We can distinguish three kinds of understanding (*paññā*): (1) understanding based on one's own reasoning, (2) understanding based on what one learns from others, (3) understanding based on mental development. The third type means insight which we will discuss with the requisites of awakening. Here, the first two types of understanding can be associated with great learning. Although mere intellectual understanding such as this will not liberate us, it can sow the seeds for insight later on. The more we know of the Buddha's teachings, the better chance we have that when we encounter difficulties, or when the circumstances are favourable to our being confused, we will be able to remember certain passages or principles that will maintain us in the Dhamma.

The last four types of right conduct are the four absorption states (*jhānas*). Ven. Ledi Sayadaw points out that those who wish to attain the Paths and Fruition States in this lifetime should fulfil the first eleven types of right conduct. It is not necessary for them to develop the absorption states. Likewise, there is no special necessity for them to practise generosity. It is those who cannot arouse sufficient effort to acquire the ability to obtain release from suffering during the present Buddha Sāsana who should make a special effort to practise generosity and keeping of the eight precepts four days a month (*uposatha-sīla*).

The Requisites of Awakening, II

*Māvamaññetha pāpassa, “na mandam āgamissati,”
udabindunipātena udakumbho pi pūrati,
bālo pūrati pāpassa thokam thokam pi ācinam.*

*Māvamaññetha puññassa, “na mandam āgamissati,”
udabindunipātena udakumbho pi pūrati
dhīro pūrati puññassa thokam thokam pi ācinam.*

You should not think evil deeds are unimportant, saying to yourself, “This will not produce any results for me.” Just as a water pot is filled by falling drops of water, so too, he who is incapable of thinking and acting in the right way is filled with evil by accumulating it little by little.

You should not think that virtuous acts leading to happy lives in the future are unimportant, saying to yourself, “This will not produce any results for me.” Just as a water pot is filled by falling drops of water, so too, he who possesses knowledge of the Dhamma is filled with virtuous acts by accumulating them little by little.

Dhammapada, vv. 121, 122

We have discussed Venerable Ledi Sayadaw’s introduction to the Thirty-Seven Requisites of Awakening (*bodhi-pakkhiya-*

dhammā). Now let us see what he has to say about the requisites themselves. They are subdivided into seven groups:

- The Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*sati-paṭṭhāna*)
- The Four Right Efforts (*samma-ppadhāna*)
- The Four Bases of Success (*idhi-pāda*)
- The Five Controlling Faculties (*indriya*)
- The Five Mental Powers (*bala*)
- The Seven Factors of Awakening (*bojjhaṅga*)
- The Eight Path Factors (*maggaṅga*)

The term *bodhi-pakkhiya-dhammā* can also be translated as “states sharing in Awakening.” They form part of Awakening or Enlightenment (*bodhi*), the Knowledge of the Noble Paths. They are mental states (*dhammā*) which serve as the proximate cause (*pada-tṭhāna*), the constituent parts (*sambhāra*), the basis or sufficient condition (*upanissaya*) for the knowledge gained with each of the four Noble Paths (*magga-ñāṇa*).

THE FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS. The Four Foundations of Mindfulness are:

- (1) Contemplation of the Body as a Foundation of Mindfulness (*kāyānupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna*)
- (2) Contemplation of Sensations as a Foundation of Mindfulness (*vedanānupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna*)
- (3) Contemplation of the Mind as a Foundation of Mindfulness (*cittānupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna*)
- (4) Contemplation of Mental Objects as a Foundation of Mindfulness (*dhammānupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna*).

Through *ānāpāna* and *vipassanā* we are developing awareness of an insight into the body, sensations, the mind, and mental objects. Mindfulness of the breath and the contact of the air below the nose is contemplation of the body. Being aware of sensations and knowing them to be changing, *anicca*, is contemplation of sensations. And when we are aware that our attention has been drawn away and that we are thinking of something else, we are able to appreciate the nature of consciousness and mental objects.

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw says that if the attention is firmly established on a part of the body such as the out-breath and in-breath, then that is equivalent to firmly establishing the attention on all things. One will be able to place one's attention on any object at will.

By "firmly established" he says he means the ability to fix the attention on the in-breath and out-breath for an hour or two without any deviation due to discursive thinking (*vitakka*). We may not be able to attain that kind of concentration yet, but through *ānāpāna* we are working for it.

Concentration of this sort is very important because once we have attained it we will be able to control the six types of consciousness (*viññāṇa*) associated with the six senses. Due to these six types of consciousness, our minds have been drifting tempestuously and untrained during all our past lives—an inconceivably long period of time.

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw gives the following illustration of how the mind is prone to flit about turning to the impressions received by the six senses: It is like a madman who has no control over his mind. He wanders about aimlessly from place to place, not even knowing when it is time to eat. His parents search for him and

give him something to eat. He eats five or six bites and then turns the dish over and walks away. Thus, he does not get enough to eat. He cannot control his mind even to the extent of finishing a meal. When he talks, he cannot control his mind enough to finish a sentence. The beginning, middle, and end of what he says is not in agreement. What he says is meaningless. He is of no use in any undertaking in this world. He cannot perform any task. He cannot be said to be a real human being.

If he meets a good doctor who applies a cure, this madman will become a sane and normal person again. He will be able to control his mind to the extent of eating his meals. He will have control over his mind in all other areas too, so that he can complete the tasks he undertakes. Like other people, he will be able to complete his sentences.

No doubt, as you try to attain *samādhi* and *vipassanā*, you notice how much like this madman you are. Even though you are not insane, still you cannot control your mind. Just like the madman who turns over his dish after five or six bites of food, your mind wanders when you try to fix it on the breath or on your sensations. When you are listening to the discourses, you find you miss parts because the mind will not stay where you put it.

You are similar to someone who suffers from hydrophobia. He is very thirsty and so seeks water, but when he sees a lake of cool, refreshing water, he runs away due to his fear of water. Or, you are like someone who is ill, but when he is given a diet of delicious food that will cure him, he finds the food bitter to his taste—so much so that he cannot swallow it and spits it out or vomits it up.

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw also gives the example of devout Buddhists who try to recite some of the Pāli texts, but find their minds wandering. If they should start over every time they are inattentive, they will never reach the end of the text, even if they keep trying for a year. They may manage to recite the whole text, but only because they can keep reciting from memory even when their mind wanders.

In a country like Myanmar, many devout laymen go to stay at the monasteries on *uposatha* days, days corresponding to the four phases of the moon. On these days they undertake the eight precepts and try to meditate. But they wind up in the company of friends and associates. They have no control over their mind. There are continual upheavals in their thoughts and intentions. They may try to practise the Sublime States (*brahma-vihāras*), but when they try to recite the text of *mettā*, they cannot send loving kindness to all beings because their thoughts are scattered aimlessly and they end up with only the external manifestation of reciting the text.

*Abhittharetha kalyāṇe pāpā cittaṃ nivāraye
dandhaṃ hi karoto puññaṃ pāpasmim ramatī mano.*

You should make haste to do meritorious actions and to keep your thoughts away from evil because, if you perform virtuous acts sluggishly, your mind will delight in evil.

Dhammapada, v 116

THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE MAN IN A BOAT. Water naturally flows down, and uncontrolled minds naturally go towards evil. Here are some illustrations given by Ven. Ledi Sayadaw:

There is a river with a fast current. A man who is unable to control the rudder of his boat is floating down the river with his boat full of valuable merchandise to be sold in the towns lower down the river. As he floats with the current, he goes through stretches of the river that run through mountains and forests and where there is no place for him to anchor his boat and there are no harbours. Night falls and he passes towns and villages but cannot see them because of the darkness. When daylight comes, he comes to more towns and villages and cannot stop because he cannot control the rudder. So he floats on until he reaches the ocean.

The river with the fast current is like continued births (*samsāra*) without any known beginning. Any being that does not control its mind is like the man who cannot control the boat's rudder. The mind is like the boat. Beings who have drifted from one existence to another during the world cycles when no Buddha appears are like the man floating through the mountains and forests without harbours and no place to drop anchor. When they are born during a period when the teachings of a Buddha flourish, they do not know about it because they are in one of the eight conditions that make it impossible to encounter a Buddha's Teachings. This is like the man floating past the towns and villages in the night without seeing them. At other times they are born as human beings, *devas* or *brahmās* during a period when the Buddha's Teachings flourish, but they do not attain the Paths and Fruition States because they cannot control their minds and therefore make the effort to practise *vipassanā*. They continue to drift through one existence after the other, like the man who sees the towns and villages where he could anchor his boat and take

harbour, but who cannot steer towards them, and so drifts on down to the ocean.

THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE BULLOCK. We can also use the illustration of the taming and training of bullocks in order to yoke them to ploughs and wagons, and the illustration of the taming and training of elephants to be used by a king or in battle.

A young calf must be regularly herded and kept in a pen. Then a rope must be attached to its nostrils so it can be tied to a post and trained to respond to the rope's control. Then it is trained to submit to the yoke, and when it is amenable to the yoke, it can be used for ploughing and pulling a wagon. Thus, it can be effectively employed to trade and make profit. Just as the profits of the owner of the bullock depend on its being trained properly, so too, the true benefit of laymen and bhikkhus depends on training the mind to attain right concentration and insight.

The purification of virtue (*sīla-visuddhi*) resembles the training of the young calf by herding it and keeping it in a pen. If the young calf is not controlled in this way, it will damage and destroy other people's property and the owner will be liable. Similarly, if a person does not strive to purify his mental, verbal and bodily actions, they will run riot and he will be subject to worldly evils and to the evils described by the Buddha in his Teachings.

We are working to purify our virtue through keeping five or eight precepts. And when the course is over, we can continue to work through keeping the five precepts at all times. This is the minimum for there to be purification of virtue. If we are able to

keep eight precepts at times, then so much the better; but whatever happens, we should maintain five precepts.

When we develop concentration through mindfulness of breathing, this is like attaching the calf with a rope in his nostrils and training the calf to respond to the rope when it is tied to a post. The calf remains where the owner wants it to when it is tied to the post. Our minds will remain wherever we want them to when the mind is tied to the body with the rope of mindfulness. And the bad habits of a disturbed and distracted mind that were acquired during the inconceivably long series of rebirths during the past will be calmed down.

A person who tries to practise calm (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*) without first developing the contemplation of the body through a technique such as *ānāpāna* resembles the owner of a bullock who yokes it to a plough or wagon before it is tamed. He will find he is unable to drive the bullock where he wants. Because the bullock is wild, and because it is not controlled by a rope attached to its nose, it will either try to run off the road or try to get loose by breaking the yoke. That is why so much emphasis is given here to developing *samādhi*, concentration of the mind which results in calming the mind. That is why we say, "Without *samādhi*, there will be no understanding (*paññā*)."
For understanding can only come when insight is present. A person who first tranquillizes and trains his mind through *ānāpāna* will be able to keep his attention steady and his work on insight will be successful.

THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE ELEPHANT. Now for the illustration of the elephant: To train a wild elephant, it must first be brought from the forest and hitched to a tame elephant which is trained.

This should be done in an open field. Next, it should be taken into a stockade and tied up securely until it is tame. When it is absolutely tame and quiet, then it can be trained in the various kinds of work it will do if it is to serve the king or serve in battle.

The realm of sensual pleasures is like the forest where the wild elephant enjoys itself. The Buddha-Sāsana is like the open field where the wild elephant is first taken. The mind is like the wild elephant. Faith (*saddhā*) and right intentions (*chanda*) concerning the Buddha's teachings are like the tame elephant that the wild elephant is hitched up to. The purification of virtue is like the stockade. Breathing is like the post in the stockade to which the elephant is tied. Mindfulness of breathing is like the rope that attaches the elephant. Preparing for calm (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*) are like the preparatory training of the elephant. Actually working on calm and insight are like the parade ground or battlefield of the king.

These illustrations—the madman, the man in the boat, the bullock, and the elephant—show the main points concerning the contemplation of the body. This is the first step that must be taken in progressing from the purification of virtue up to the final goal in the Sāsanas of all the Buddhas who have appeared in the past throughout the inconceivable long period of *samsāra*.

Once you are able to keep your attention fixed for as long as you wish, then you will have mastered your mind, then you will be released from the state of a madman, then you will resemble a man in a boat who has mastery over the rudder, or the owner of a tamed and trained bullock, or the king who has a tamed and trained elephant.

We are working to develop insight (*vipassanā*) without developing to the highest degree in tranquillity (*samatha*), for that is

more appropriate to bhikkhus. This will require much wisdom and industry. But we can hope to attain *udayabbaya-ñāṇa* (knowledge arising from the contemplation of the arising and vanishing of mental and physical phenomena), and this is very valuable indeed. The Buddha said that if one can control the mind and fix the attention and keep it wherever one wants, then one can enjoy the taste of Deathless Nibbāna (*amata nibbāna*):

Amataṃ tesam paribhuttaṃ yesam kāyagatā sati paribhuttā.

Whoever purifies himself through mindfulness of the body enjoys the deathless (Nibbāna).

Here a taste of deathless Nibbāna means great peacefulness or tranquillity of mind. In its original state, the mind is very unstable in terms of being attentive. Thus, it is parched and hot by nature. Just as insects that live on pepper plants are not aware of the heat of the peppers, in the same way, beings who live dominated by craving (*taṇhā*) are not aware of the heat of craving, and beings dominated by pride and anger are not aware of the heat of pride and anger. In the same way, beings are unaware of the heat of the unsettled mind. Only after becoming aware of the heat of an unsettled mind through concentration can this be seen clearly. In this way, the heat will disappear as long as the mind is concentrated, and then one will dread having a relapse and the return of the heat.

The more highly developed one is, the more difficult it is to be separated from the contemplation of the body. Noble persons (*ariya-puggalas*) use the four foundations of mindfulness as

mental nutriment until such time as they attain final liberation (*parinibbāna*).

This will give us an idea of how valuable this effort we are making to attain concentration and insight is. Ven. Ledi Sayadaw says that bringing the work on *ānāpāna* to perfection may take many years of constant effort. But even with a course of ten days it is possible to get a good appreciation of how to work properly and of the benefits to be derived.

THE FOUR RIGHT EFFORTS. Now let us look at the Four Right Efforts (*sammappadhāna*) which will be a great help to us in our work, not only during a course, but also in our daily lives. The Four Right Efforts are:

- (1) The effort to overcome or reject unwholesome states that have arisen or that are arising.
- (2) The effort to avoid (in this life and in lives to come) the arising of unwholesome states that have not arisen.
- (3) The effort to make wholesome states that are not yet arisen to arise.
- (4) The effort of repeatedly cultivating the wholesome states that have arisen or that are arising.

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw quotes the definition given in Pāḷi for Right Effort: *Bhusaṃ dhahati vahaṭi ti padhānaṃ samma-d-eva padhānaṃ sammappadhānaṃ*. (Right effort means striving correctly, striving that one is able to put forth to the utmost.) And he explains that this means an effort that is not mixed with any unwillingness. Another name for it is “zealous energy” (*ātāpaviriya*). For a person who has made the right kind of effort in the past, it is possible to make a supreme effort such as the one made

by the Bodhisatta on the day he became a Buddha. He resolved that he would not let up in his striving, even if only his skin, sinews and bones remained, even if his flesh and blood dried up. But this kind of effort implies that a person is capable of making a perfectly balanced effort, and Sayagyi U Ba Khin did not encourage his students to grit their teeth, for he knew that they were not ready yet for that kind of effort.

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw points out that some people make a great effort but do not have enough proficiency in what is taught in the texts (*pariyatti*). Others, who have learned enough from the texts are involved in discussing the Dhamma, giving discourses and writing books on the Dhamma. Neither type of person is capable of putting forth right effort for long periods without a break.

Other people say that when their *pāramīs* are mature and the time is right for them to obtain release from suffering, they will easily obtain release. They are unwilling to put forth effort now since they are not certain that the effort will result in release. As we pointed out in the introductory talk, Ven. Ledi Sayadaw emphasizes that every effort brings results. So we should never hide behind excuses.

The four right efforts deal with two sorts of actions: unwholesome volitional actions (*akusala-kamma*) and wholesome volitional actions (*kusala-kamma*). They are either arisen (*uppanna*), meaning they exist in the present moment or that they have spent themselves out by giving results in the past, or, they are not arisen (*anuppanna*), meaning they are still to be done.

We have done innumerable volitional actions in the past world-cycles which have no known beginning. Some of our unwholesome volitional acts have spent themselves out by having produced rebirths in the four lower planes of misery

(*apāya-loka*). Other actions await the opportunity of producing rebirth in these lower worlds. This potential for rebirth in the *apāya-lokas* accompanies beings from world-cycle to world-cycle and from one life to another.

Every being that still holds the belief in a permanent self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) possesses an infinite store of past debts consisting in unwholesome volitional actions with the potential of producing rebirths in the lowest Avīci hell. Other past actions have the potential of causing rebirth in the other lower planes of existence. These past actions which are waiting for favourable circumstances in order to produce rebirths accompany beings from one life to another until they are productive. These are arisen unwholesome volitional actions.

The moment a person gains insight into the characteristic of no-self (*anatta-lakkhaṇa*) these past unwholesome actions lose their force and disappear from the store of past actions. From that moment on, one is no longer subject to rebirth in the lower worlds, even in one's dreams.

Beginning with the next instant in our present life, all the new evil and unwholesome acts that we commit whenever an opportunity occurs in this present life and in the succession of lives to come are unarisen unwholesome volitional actions. We are capable of committing an infinite number of such actions in any one lifetime. As in the past, future unwholesome actions come from the mistaken belief in a lasting personality.

If we are able at any time to get rid of this mistaken belief in a permanent self, from that moment on, all the new unwholesome volitional actions will disappear leaving no residue. They will give no more results. Throughout the beginningless succession of rebirths (*anamatagga saṃsāra*) we will not commit unwhole-

some acts that result in birth in the lower worlds, not even in our dreams. All beings who continue to hold the mistaken belief in a lasting personality are hedged in before and behind by the hell-fires of arisen and unarisen unwholesome volitional actions—no matter how fortunate they are. One might be a Universal Monarch; a king of the *deva* worlds; Sakka, who is the king of the Tāvātimsa *deva* world; or a *brahmā* in the fine-material or immaterial *brahmā* worlds—if wrong belief is present, one is still liable to rebirth in the four lower worlds.

The only escape is through cultivating the desire to encounter a Buddha era (*sāsana*), which is extremely difficult to do. And once we have encountered a Buddha-Sāsana, as we have in this life, we must put forth as much effort as we are capable of to extinguish the hell-fires of arisen and unarisen unwholesome volitional actions. Through knowing *anicca*, we will be able to experience first-hand the fact that there is no permanent, controlling self in us. And this will extinguish the fires.

There is an infinitely great number of beings like Mother Visākhā and Anāthapiṇḍika who are what is called in the Myanmar language *Bon-sin-san sotāpannas*. They are beings of the Supramundane Sphere (*lokuttara*).¹

AVOIDING UNWHOLESOME ACTIONS. Now let us look at some ways in which we can avoid unwholesome actions. Ven. Buddhaghosa ends his chapter on virtue in the *Path of Purification* with the advantages of maintaining virtue. The bhikkhu with immaculate virtue gives pleasure and inspires trust in

¹ *Bon-sin-san* means individuals who go from the human world to higher and higher *deva* and *brahmā* worlds.

wearing his robes and carrying his bowl. He need never fear self-reproach. He shines like the sun and moon. The odour of his body is pleasing to the *devas*—and even more so the perfume of his virtue, for the perfume of his virtue is greater than all other perfumes, as it spreads unchecked in all directions. Deeds, no matter how small, that are done for a virtuous man will bear great fruit. None of the intoxicants can plague him here and now, and he digs out the root of suffering in future lives. If he wishes to attain perfection among men and *devas*, it is not difficult for him to attain it. But once his virtue is perfected, he seeks only the perfection of Nibbāna.

“The mind of one who understands thus,” Ashin Buddhaghosa says, “shudders at failure in virtue and reaches out towards the perfecting of virtue. So virtue should be cleansed with all care, seeing this danger of failure in virtue and this benefit of the perfection of virtue.”¹

We will see through first-hand experience that if we are not firm in our resolution to avoid situations that lead to breaking *sīla*, then we will encounter situations that overpower us. As the English saying goes, “He who hesitates is lost.” Even though, at times, we may be able to slug it out—force ourselves to do the right thing—many times we could have avoided the situation entirely. If we associate with people who are going to tempt us, prod us to do things such as kill, steal, lie, drink, commit adultery, etc., we will be less likely to avoid such actions. If we frequent places where such people are found, we are more likely to come under their influence. It is useless to pretend we can save

¹This discussion is an extract from the *Perfection of Virtue* in the Dhamma-dāna series of publications by the Sayagyi U Ba Khin Memorial Trust, U.K.

such people, that we are there with them so our good influence will guide them. There are already many situations which cannot be avoided. As the results of actions done in past lives mature in this life, we will find ourselves unavoidably thrown into situations where there will be strong temptations. It is sufficient to confront these situations and use all our energy and determination to do the right thing then. We do not need to put ourselves in such situations on purpose.

This is why, on the one hand, the Buddha said that associating with the Noble Friend is the whole of the life of the Dhamma, but, on the other hand, he laid much emphasis on the advantages of the life of solitude. A Noble Friend who will help us to grow in the Dhamma is not always available. If we cannot be with such persons, we are better off alone. Even alone, if we practise the Buddha's Teachings, we will not feel lonely, for at such times we are close to the Buddha, the best of all friends.

There are three levels of effort to make: physical actions, verbal actions, and mental actions.

Here are some examples of making an effort with regard to physical actions. Let us take not killing as an example. If our self control is not very highly developed, we may not even notice our anger until we are on the point of killing. We may be sitting very still, meditating, and a mosquito lands on our hand and starts to bite. We feel the pain, and our reaction is so fast, our level of awareness so dull, we do not notice we are about to do a wrong action till our hand is raised, ready to kill the insect. If we *do* become aware at that moment of what we are about to do, we can restrain ourselves.

But there are better ways of dealing with such situations. If we reflect before we begin to meditate, and realize that there are

mosquitoes around and that if we do not take precautions, we will probably be bitten by one, then we can look for something to protect us: we can cover up exposed parts of our body. Or, if this is not possible, we can prepare ourselves for the moment the mosquito will come and resolve that we will not kill it. It can help to review what we have learned of the Buddha's Teachings: that we have gone through a number of lives beyond counting in which we have killed and have suffered for killing. If we are to escape from this vicious circle, we must put an end to killing. No amount of physical discomfort in this life can equal one moment of the suffering that will result in future lives if we do not stop killing now.

Now let us look at an example of wrong speech. Perhaps out of ignorance, when talking to other people, we speak in favour of killing mosquitoes. We may say something like, "I can't stand being bitten by mosquitoes. Just the sound of them buzzing around is enough to drive me crazy." In speaking in this way, we are admitting our lack of control, implying that we will not try to learn how to control ourselves, and we will be encouraging the taking of life. What we say may be used by the other person to feel justified in killing mosquitoes himself. And the more we speak in this manner, the less inclined we will be to make the right effort ourselves.

Right effort for thoughts is the hardest of all. We must have the highest level of concentration for this. But if we train ourselves to recognize as soon as possible the wrong thoughts that precede killing, the better we will be able to avoid such actions. Whenever we begin to think of mosquitoes, we will tend to have negative thoughts if there is no control. But if we can recognize this as it happens, then we can begin to train ourselves to come

back to the breath below the nose and the touch of the air coming in and going out. Or, if this does not work, we can remind ourselves of the Buddha's Teachings, as we mentioned above.

The greatest aid in our daily lives will be learning to control the senses. This means exercising as much control as possible over the things we pay attention to. The more we control what we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and think, the better we will be able to lead moral lives. This in turn will help us to concentrate better and appreciate *anicca* more fully. It will mean that our lives will be happier.

We should do our best to control our senses the way those who have attained at least the first stage of Awakening do. In the Myanmar commentary on the *pāramīs*, the importance of being mindful is pointed out.¹ Killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, taking intoxicants, and lying are all actions which lead to the lower planes of existence. Those who are Ariyas, who have reached at least the state of Stream-Winner, never do such acts. Even if their lives are threatened they will not do such acts, for they have eliminated the root of the tendency (*anusaya*) to do immoral acts. Observing the five precepts, which means abstaining from such acts, is necessary for all who become Buddhists.

A lay person such as Mother Visākhā, who is a Stream-Winner or Once-Returner, may have lawful sexual relations, eat after noon, dance and sing, etc., and use high and lofty seats and beds. But we should not take this to mean it is possible to indulge in such activity indiscriminately. To do so would mean that we would do so more and more and cultivate wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*). Ariyas do not use material things soliciting sense

¹See the *Perfection of Virtue* under "Virtue as two kinds (a)."

desire (*vatthu-kāma*) in the same way an ordinary person does. In the commentary to the *Āṅguttara-nikāya*, it is said that the Ariyan disciple approaches agreeable formations (*saṅkhāra*) like a clean Brahman who seeks safety in a dung heap from an elephant in rut. For the Ariya, the burning fever (of desire) is subdued, calmed. Ordinary people, on the other hand, generally enjoy sensual pleasures with wrong view.

The quicker we are able to turn away from things which provoke unwholesome reactions and actions, the better off we will be. In the world today, we are constantly surrounded by sights and sounds, etc., which encourage us to react in an unwholesome manner. Advertising and the five precepts can serve as a good example.

On the most direct level, we may be encouraged by advertisements to kill. This would include ads which tell us to buy a certain insect spray in order to kill insects, or a poison to put on plants in the garden. In more subtle ways, ads which romanticize hunting and fishing, or being a soldier, are an encouragement to killing higher forms of life, including human beings. Even when people think they are acting out of compassion for other people's suffering by advocating euthanasia, they are encouraging killing. The Buddha pointed out that trying to predict where a person who dies or is killed will be reborn is like trying to predict exactly where a stick that we throw up in the air will land. We cannot say that we have reduced anyone's suffering through ending their life.

The more we give attention to such advertisements, the more our thoughts will be filled with the idea of killing. We will not be able to lead a normal life as laymen and avoid all contact with

such ads. But we can give them as little attention as possible. We can turn away from them whenever possible.

We are less likely to find encouragement to steal in advertisements in magazines, on the radio or television. But more and more today, novels and movies represent the heroes as being able to steal and get away with it. This may be justified by depicting the hero as a sort of Robin Hood who steals from the rich and gives to the poor, but even that is often not the case. The hero steals to make himself rich. We can often get a general idea in advance of the subject matter of a book or movie before we read it or go to see it. So, it should be easy to avoid exposure to such immoral propaganda.

One of the major themes of advertising is sexual indulgence. This powerful force is used by businesses to sell almost any product: cars, newspapers, cigarettes, alcohol, perfumes, jewellery, etc. Almost any product can be directly or indirectly associated with physical attractiveness. Our eyes will be constantly coming into contact with images that will arouse our sexual desires. The songs we hear will rarely have any other theme than sensual love with all the attachment, craving, and suffering that involves.

Advertisements will also set us a very bad example when it comes to right speech. Exaggeration is the rule rather than the exception. Implications which are not directly stated, and so can be excused as not being direct lies, get across the message the seller wants us to believe. If we use a certain product we will be beautiful, stay young, etc.

Among the biggest advertisers are the makers of alcohol. Even though doctors tell us that alcoholism is one of the leading diseases of mankind, very little is done to combat this disease

when compared with the efforts made to encourage taking intoxicants. Even if we think that we are immune to temptation, exposing ourselves unnecessarily to the attractive image presented of taking alcohol will subtly break down our resolve or at the very least, create tensions in us.

All these examples appeal to the six senses. Even when we are not in contact with such advertisements, we will find our thoughts turning to them. The better our ability to be conscious of the fact that the mind is indulging in unwholesome thoughts, the better we will be able to detach ourselves from them. We will be able to dismiss such thoughts and come back to the in-breath, and out-breath, and the touch of the air below the nose.

We must make a conscious effort to minimize our exposure to all the encouragement around us to lead immoral lives. We can be more selective in the sorts of newspapers and magazines we read, in the books we read, the television programmes we watch, and the movies we go to. We can avoid going to places where such temptations are found, and we can avoid being with people who encourage us to break any of the precepts. This does not mean becoming sanctimonious or holier than thou. We have friends and family for whom we are responsible. For them, we can make every effort to be a good friend—one who sets a good example and who encourages others to do good. But in situations where we are not responsible for other people, it is best to remember that in the ultimate sense, each individual is responsible for his own actions. It is better to go our own way than to interfere and provoke ill will and agitation in ourselves and in others. On the other hand, we may find ourselves confronted with a situation we cannot avoid when we would be compromis-

ing the Dhamma if we did not speak out clearly and firmly. In such cases, we must stand steadfast.

We will sometimes find ourselves in situations where it seems impossible to avoid breaking one of the precepts. Even a Bodhisatta may decide to do such actions as going to war to protect the citizens of his country. Such decisions are very difficult to take, and we must be very clear and able to think correctly if we are to make a wise decision. Whatever we do, we must never excuse ourselves, thinking that a good action can cancel out an immoral action. No matter how justified an immoral action may seem, it will result in future suffering. The Buddha said that even if we are being tortured to death, if we feel ill will towards those who are torturing us, we will suffer for it.

Studying the Teachings of the Buddha can help us to avoid finding excuses for ourselves and help us to take responsibility for all our actions. The better we understand the Dhamma, the better we will be able to learn from our mistakes. We will stop blaming other people or circumstances for our wrong actions.

“Bhikkhus,” the Buddha said, “abandon evil. It can be done. If it were impossible to abandon evil, I would not tell you to do so. But since it can be done, I say, ‘Abandon evil.’ If abandoning evil led to loss and sorrow, I would not say ‘Abandon evil.’ But since it leads to profit and happiness, I say, ‘Abandon evil, bhikkhus.’ Bhikkhus, cultivate the good. It can be done. If it were impossible to cultivate the good, I would not tell you to do so. But since it can be done, I say, ‘Cultivate the good, bhikkhus.’ If the cultivation of good led to loss and sorrow, I

would not say, ‘Cultivate the good.’ But since it leads to profit and happiness, I say, ‘Bhikkhus, cultivate the good.’”¹

In our next talk, we will discuss the cultivation of wholesome acts.

¹*Gradual Sayings* I 53.

The Requisites of Awakening, III

*Puññañ ce puriso kayirā
kayirā naṃ punappunam,
tamhi chandaṃ karyirātha,
sukho puññassa uccayo.*

A man who does a meritorious act should do it again and again. He should delight in this: the happiness of the accumulation of meritorious acts.

Dhammapada, v 118

We come now to Ven. Ledi Sayadaw's discussion of arisen and unarisen wholesome volitional acts (*uppanna-* and *anuppanna-kusala-kamma*). He discusses these in relation to virtue (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*), and in connection with the seven purifications (*satta-visuddhi*).

WRONG VIEWS. Ven. Ledi Sayadaw begins by considering the dangers of holding wrong views (*diṭṭhi*). Wrong views are the root cause of the bad acts (*duccarita*) which have arisen in the past or present and which are yet to arise in the future. It is because of such bad acts that continued births (*samsāra*) are so terrifying. Because of them, there is no hiding place, no haven on which one can rely.

When wrong views are eradicated, bad acts of the past, present, and future are also extinguished. This means one is

released from rebirth in the lower worlds and is assured of rebirth only in high states as a human, or rebirth in the *deva* and *brahmā* planes. That is why it is so important for people today to make an attempt to extinguish the great evil of wrong views. The very fact that they are reborn as humans and that they encounter a period when the Teachings of a Buddha are alive shows that they have cultivated the desire to come into contact with a Buddha-Sāsana in order to obtain release from rebirth in the lower worlds and at the same time to be freed of all bad deeds.

There are three degrees of wrong view:

- (1) transgression (*vitikkama*) in physical actions or speech;
- (2) obsession (*pariyuṭṭhāna*) with evil thoughts; in other words, being mentally involved with the defilements (*kilesa*);
- (3) latent predisposition (*anusaya*) towards the defilements.

These three degrees of wrong view are connected to the wrong view that there is a permanent self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*). Transgression is the gross level, obsession is the less obvious level, and latent predisposition is the subtle level. They are closely tied to the ten sorts of unwholesome volitional actions:

(A) Three types of wrong physical actions:

1. killing
2. stealing
3. sexual misconduct

(B) Four types of wrong verbal actions:

4. lying
5. slandering

6. rude speech
7. foolish babble
- (C) Three types of wrong mental actions:
 8. avarice
 9. ill-will
 10. wrong views.

The gross level of wrong views, transgression, includes all unwholesome volitional acts done through physical and verbal actions. The less obvious level, obsession, includes all evil thoughts. The subtle level, latent predisposition, includes all the evil that has been connected with a personality throughout the continued rebirths without a known beginning (*anamatagga-samsāra*). The latent predisposition has not yet resulted in thoughts, speech, and actions.

THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE MATCH BOX. These levels of wrong view are like the three kinds of fire in a match box. The first type of fire is the fire that is latent in the entire box of matches. The second type is the fire that ignites a match stick when it is struck. The third type is the fire that is transferred to another object when it is brought into contact with the burning match. This third type of fire is capable of burning rubbish, clothes, houses, monasteries, and villages. This fire that is transferred to another object is like the coarse transgressions embodied in physical and verbal acts. The fire that burns a match is like the less obvious wrong view of being obsessed with evil thoughts. These obsessions take place every time the mind comes into contact with objects of thought. The fire that is latent in the entire box is like the subtle wrong view of latent predisposition that is a part of the

personality of all beings who have not obtained release and has been so throughout life after life for countless æons.

The fire that is latent in the box of matches does not burst into flame as long as the match head is not rubbed on the nitrous surface of the match box. The latent fire will not cause any harm even if it is kept next to highly inflammable articles such as gunpowder. Similarly, the latent predisposition of a person does not manifest itself as long as it does not come into contact with evil objects of thought or other causes of evil. When, however, evil objects of thought or other causes of evil come into contact with the six sense-doors, the latent predisposition is disturbed and begins to make itself manifest to the mind-door. Or, on the level of obsession with evil thoughts, it becomes manifest through the function of volition. If one can suppress the evil thoughts when they arise by right views, they will disappear from the level of obsessions and return to the level of latent predispositions. If they cannot be suppressed, they continue to manifest themselves and develop as volitions. If they are further disturbed at the level of being obsessions, then they will eventually manifest themselves in the level of transgression through physical actions or speech.

If a person can control himself with regards to obsessions and transgressions, then his physical actions, his speech and thoughts will be clean and unsoiled in the ordinary sense of those words, and he is considered to be good, pious or moral. But such a person is not aware of the level of latent predispositions. If that level is not destroyed, even if one exercises perfect control over obsessions and transgressions, the control will only be temporary. A person who is strong in the observance of good principles can exercise control throughout his entire life. But there can be

no certainty as far as the next life is concerned, for upheavals in those two planes may recur in the next life.

These same three degrees of wrong view hold true for the three unwholesome roots of existence: greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*).

In order to destroy these three degrees of wrong view completely, men must make an effort to develop the three trainings (*sikkhā*): virtue (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*), and they must practise the seven purifications (*visuddhi*).

Laymen should keep the moral precepts with right livelihood as the eighth (*ājivaṭṭhamaka-sīla*). This includes abstaining from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct and the taking of intoxicants, from telling lies, from setting one person against another, from using rude and harsh words, from frivolous talk, and from wrong livelihood. It is good if they can follow the eight precepts—that is, the eight precepts many of the students keep during *vipassanā* courses—or the ten precepts (*dasāṅga-sīla*)—that is, keeping the eight precepts plus abstaining from accepting money. In the ten precepts, the seventh of the eight precepts is divided into two. Keeping the eight precepts and ten precepts is not necessary for laymen, however. For all the meditators on a course here, keeping at least the five precepts and observing noble silence will result in keeping the moral precepts with right livelihood as the eighth.

Here we wish to mention incidentally that when Sayagyi U Ba Khin was Accountant General of Myanmar, we noticed that he kept ten precepts (*dasāṅga-sīla*) each month from the full-moon day to the new-moon day. It is essential for those who aim to reach higher attainments to observe the highest moral conduct

that a layman can practise. When Sayagyi taught Buddhist meditation to his staff in the Accountant General's office beginning in 1951, he recommended that his students observe the eight precepts ending in right livelihood (*ājivaṭṭhamaka-sīla*) at all times. These precepts put added emphasis on right speech. And he recommended that the students keep the eight precepts on observance days (*uposatha-sīla*) on the special days in the month, if they could. These precepts add to the five precepts: not eating after noon; abstaining from dancing, singing, music, shows, using garlands, perfumes, cosmetics, and adornment; and abstaining from the use of high, luxurious sets or beds. The special days in the month correspond to the phases of the moon: the full moon, new moon, and the two quarter moons.

Destroying the three degrees of wrong view through concentration means developing preliminary concentration, access concentration, and full concentration. Here, we work for preliminary and access concentration, as that enables us to go on to the next step, the development of wisdom, insight. *Ānāpāna* meditation enables us to attain access concentration. In that way, we reach the temporary purity that comes when wrong view is controlled at the level of transgression and obsession.

With *vipassanā* meditation, we are able to destroy wrong view at the level of latent predispositions. This is the way to permanent purity. This is true wisdom (*paññā*), true insight (*vipassanā*). Through the precepts and *ānāpāna* we are able to attain the first two of the seven purifications:

- (1) purification of virtue (*sīla-visuddhi*), and
- (2) purification of mind (*citta-visuddhi*).

With *vipassanā* we must work to attain the next four:

- (3) purification of view (*ditṭhi-visuddhi*),
- (4) purification by overcoming doubt (*kaṅkhāvitarāṇa-visuddhi*),
- (5) purification through knowledge and vision of what is and what is not the Path (*maggāmagga-ñāṇa-dassana-visuddhi*), and
- (6) purification through knowledge and vision of the Way (*paṭipadā-ñāṇa-dassana-visuddhi*).

These last four purifications are mundane purifications. We can attain them while still an ordinary person. Through them, we will eventually attain the supramundane stage:

- (7) purification by knowledge and vision (*ñāṇa-dassana-visuddhi*).

If we are able to keep the precepts at all times, then we will destroy wrong view on the level of transgression, we will possess the purification of virtue and upheavals will not occur in our physical and verbal acts. If we are able to maintain our awareness of the breath as our meditative practice (*bhāvanā-mana-sikāra*), then upheavals will not occur in our thoughts. If we are able to be aware of the changing nature (*anicca*) of our sensations we will possess wisdom (*paññā*) and will destroy our latent predisposition towards the defilements. This means that we obtain insight into the personality, realizing that this coming together is impermanent (*anicca*), thus it is painful (*dukkha*) and without a lasting self (*anattā*). Then the latent store of wrong view which may manifest itself in such wrong ideas as belief in the existence of a person (*puggala*), a living being (*satta*), permanence (*nicca*), pleasure (*sukha*), and a lasting self (*attā*)

will disappear. As long as the tendency to hold wrong views exists, the elimination of transgression through virtue and the mental obsessions through concentration (*samādhi*) can only be temporary.

ARISEN AND UNARISEN ACTIONS. Now let us consider actions in terms of those which have arisen (*uppanna*) and those which have not arisen (*anuppanna*). This can be done in two ways: (1) dividing acts using this life as the starting point, and (2) dividing acts using the unlimited past series of rebirths (*samsāra*) as the starting point.

If this life is used as the starting point, unarisen virtue applies to those who have never undertaken to keep the moral precepts in this life. Anyone who has kept the precepts in this life possesses arisen virtue. The same is true for concentration and wisdom: everything attained during this life is arisen; whatever has not been attained is unarisen.

If we use our past lives as the starting point, there are two kinds of virtue, concentration, and wisdom: mundane (*lokiya*) and supramundane (*lokuttara*). We have all kept the rules of mundane virtue and attained mundane concentration on numerous occasions in past lives. Those of us who have encountered a Buddha-Sāsana and have practised the four mundane purifications in past lives have attained mundane wisdom. So all of us may have reached arisen mundane virtue, concentration, and wisdom.

Supramundane virtue, concentration, and wisdom is acquired once one has attained Nibbāna, even if only for a split second. These we have not acquired in past lives, and so they will remain unarisen unless we can reach that point in this life.

THE FOUR TYPES OF EFFORT. Before going into mundane and supramundane virtue, concentration, and wisdom in more detail, let us examine the four types of effort (*sammapadhāna*):

- (1) The opportunity of ridding oneself completely of arisen unwholesome actions (*uppanna-akusala-kamma*) only exists when one encounters a Buddha-Sāsana.
- (2) The opportunity of preventing the appearance of new unwholesome volitional actions (*anuppanna-akusala-kamma*) in future lives can similarly only exist if a Buddha-Sāsana is encountered.
- (3) The effort to make wholesome actions (*kusala-kamma*) to appear in one's personality, and
- (4) The effort to preserve and maintain the wholesome actions that have appeared in one's personality should both be undertaken in order to achieve the establishment of contemplation of the body (which we work for with *ānāpāna*) and the realization that our personality is not a permanent self.

The first two steps cannot be taken no matter how many lives we live in the future if a Buddha era is not encountered. This is because ridding oneself of arisen unwholesome actions and preventing unarisen unwholesome actions is identical with the task of destroying the latent predisposition towards the defilements. The wrong view of belief in a permanent personality (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) is only destroyed through meditation on no-self (*anattā*). The Buddha said that fully realizing any one of the three characteristics of conditioned existence (*dukkha, anicca, anattā*) automatically meant that one would realize the other two as well. So our work on knowing sensations in the body as

impermanent (*anicca*) can be considered to be work towards realizing *anattā*.

Those who are to become Pacceka Buddhas, that is, Non-teaching Buddhas, first acquired the seeds of *anatta-bhāvanā* (the meditation on no-self) when they encountered a teaching Buddha's Sāsana. During periods when the Teachings of a Buddha do not exist, not even the sound of *anattā* is to be heard. When it is said that "not even the sound of *anattā* is to be heard", related terms are included as well, terms such as *rūpa*, *nāma* (the aggregate of mind-matter), *khandha*, *āyatana*, *dhātu* (sensory element, the element of sense perception, and the physical element), and *paṭicca-samuppāda* (Dependent Origination). The whole of the Abhidhamma-piṭaka is replete with the sound of *anattā*, as is the whole of its compendium, *A Manual of Abhidhamma* (Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha).

ARISEN AND NON-ARISEN VIRTUE (*UPPANNA- AND ANUPPANNA-SĪLA*). Non-arisen virtue for an ordinary person (*puthujjana*) means Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood in the Supramundane Eightfold Path. These are attained together with the Path of Stream-entry (*sotāpatti-magga*) and have Nibbāna as their object. This supramundane virtue destroys evil acts which manifest themselves in physical actions, speech and wrong ways of earning a living. As soon as this destruction takes place, these three types of evil never appear again, even for an instant, throughout the many lives and world cycles that follow for the person who has gone beyond the category of ordinary person.

Supramundane virtue is achieved only when *anattā* has been thoroughly and directly understood. As we said, our work here on realizing *anicca* in bodily sensations will lead us to such

understanding. Beings must try to achieve this non-arisen virtue while they are still living during the period when a Buddha's Teachings are alive. We must establish the purification of virtue (*sīla-visuddhi*), practise contemplation of the body (*kāyagatā-sati*)—which we do in *ānāpāna*—and eliminate all wrong view—which we do in *vipassanā*. Together with all of these, we must make a maximum of effort to practise the Thirty-Seven Requisites of Awakening (*bodhi-pakkhiya-dhammā*).

Our goal is to go beyond unstable virtue (*aniyāma-sīla*) and to attain stable virtue (*niyāma-sīla*). In other words, our goal is to go beyond the state of being an ordinary person (*puthujjana*) and to become a Noble person (Ariya). This means becoming at least a Stream-Winner (*sotāpanna*), because those who have reached that stage do not transgress the virtuous precepts ending in right livelihood, even in their dreams, in any of the series of lives and world cycles that they go through before the final liberation of *parinibbāna*. Arisen virtue (*uppanna-sīla*), which includes the virtue maintained by beings often during innumerable past lives, is also called mundane virtue (*lokiya-sīla*) or virtue of the sense-spheres (*kāmāvacara-sīla*). This mundane virtue in the sense-spheres, which include the planes of existence below the *brahmā* planes, is stable only for those who have become Ariyas.

Ordinary persons can only achieve unstable virtue in the sense-spheres. Everyone has achieved this type of virtue innumerable times in their past lives. But they have also suffered in the lower worlds of misery (*apāya-loka*) a countless number of times. Even though they have been virtuous hermits and bhikkhus in innumerable lives, they have never been free from the danger of being liable to rebirth in the lower worlds of misery. Even now, there are countless numbers of beings in these

lower worlds and the number of humans, *devas* and *brahmās* who are on the brink of being born in the lower worlds of misery are countless also.

Therefore, those who possess the mundane virtue of the sense-spheres that is unstable and that remains with them for only a short moment should attempt to make their virtue stable now, while there is still an opportunity during a Buddha-Sāsana.

Concentration and wisdom, like virtue, are also either stable or unstable. The full concentration of the *jhānas* (*appanā-samādhi*) cannot be stable unless one has reached the stage of a Non-Returner (*anāgāmi*). Wisdom that attains the *tādi* quality of a fully equanimous state of mind is stable only for the Arahāt.

Significant progress comes, on the other hand, with the attainment of the Path of Stream-Entry (*sotāpatti-magga*). Supramundane concentration (*lokuttara-samādhi*) is reached then, meaning that Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration have been attained. Through these three steps of the Supramundane Eightfold Path, the mental evils of covetousness (*abhijjhā*), and ill-will (*vyāpāda*), which have wrong effort (*micchā-vāyāma*), wrong attention (*micchā-sati*), and wrong concentration (*micchā-samādhi*) as their roots, can be extinguished once and for all. They are eliminated through overcoming by eradication (*samuccheda-pahāna*). Once they are eliminated, the mental evils of covetousness and ill-will do not arise again in any future lives. These evil deeds (*duccarita*) do not arise for Ariyas even in their dreams in any of their lives that lead to the final attainment of *parinibbāna*.

The concentration of the Noble Eightfold Path has never arisen in the past for ordinary persons and can only be achieved during a Buddha-Sāsana. Thus, it is vital that it be achieved

before one is severed from the Sāsana by the vicissitudes of wandering through life after life.

Everyone has attained a countless number of times in the past the neighbourhood concentration of the sense-spheres which include the *deva* planes and the planes below them (*kāmāvacara-samādhi*). They have also attained the concentration of the fine-material planes (*rūpāvacara-samādhi*), and the concentration of the immaterial planes (*arūpāvacara-samādhi*). In the past, everyone has been laymen, hermits, and bhikkhus with highly developed unstable concentration, having attained the *jhānas* and supernormal powers (*iddhi*) during countless existences. There are four world cycles (*kappa*) in each world system. During three of these world cycles, ordinary persons were *brahmās* in the *brahmā* planes. But the lower planes of misery (*apāya-loka*) appeared also, and they were filled with the same persons who were *brahmās*. Ordinary persons have been *brahmās*, human beings, hungry ghosts (*petas*), animals, Asuras, and inhabitants of hell. Each world cycle is unimaginably long in duration. But when compared with the duration of *samsāra*, each world cycle is like a blink of the eye.

This gives us an idea of how important it is to attain stable concentration while we have the opportunity.

Supramundane wisdom (*paññā*) is attained when one achieves Right View and Right Thought of the Noble Eightfold Path through the Path of Stream-Entry which has Nibbāna as its object. This is stable wisdom. It destroys the latent predisposition to the wrong view that there is a controlling self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*). Through abandoning by cutting off (*samuccheda-pahānha*), it dispels every vestige of wrong view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) and wrong thought (*micchā-saṅkappa*) as well as wrong actions (*duccarita-*

kamma) and wrong livelihood (*durāṇijīva*). The old store of wrong actions disappears and release is obtained from rebirth in the lower planes (*apāya saṃsāra*). From the instant that Stream-Entry is attained, the evils of wrong view and wrong actions never appear again in any future existence. This stable wisdom only appears during a Buddha-Sāsana when there is the possibility to practise mental development in order to realize that there is no self (*anattā-bhāvanā*).

The Right View and Right Thought of the Ariyas is stable. From the moment they are established as Ariyas, throughout the series of lives that follow until they attain final liberation, they possess knowledge of the right view that all beings have their own volitional actions as their only property (*kammassakatā sammā-diṭṭhi ñāṇa*), knowledge of the doctrine (*pariyatti-ñāṇa*), knowledge of the practice (*paṭipatti-ñāṇa*) and knowledge of the Four Noble Truths.

The mundane wisdom of ordinary persons is unstable. In past lives, they have often attained the right view that all beings have their own volitional actions as their only property, all kinds of knowledge and wisdom belonging to the realm of sensuous pleasures (*kāmāvacara*), and the higher powers (*abhiññā*) such as the divine eye (*dibba-cakkhu*) and the divine ear (*dibba-sota*). In past lives, ordinary persons have at times been learned in the Dhamma; at times they were renowned for their learning; at times they were great Theras and great physicians. But at other times, they were cockles, snails, worms, leeches, lice, bugs, maggots, ticks, etc.—creatures that can be said to be just barely alive.

So, when there is an opportunity, as there is now, to transform unstable wisdom into stable wisdom, every effort must be made

to establish awareness, to fulfill the requisites of Awakening, and to realize the lack of self. This we are doing if we apply ourselves sincerely during this *vipassanā* course.

The belief in a permanent self has been continuously established in our personalities throughout the unimaginably long period of past lives. As long as this wrong belief is not destroyed, defilements such as greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*) remain keen, numerous and strong. They may be said to be permanent native inhabitants residing in our bodies. Virtue (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*) are the enemies of these defilements, and they are like occasional alien visitors in our bodies. Their presence resembles the enemy aliens who trespassed in the kingdom of the ogre Āḷavaka. This kingdom was inhabited by wild and powerful ogres. The enemy aliens soon became the food of these ogres and their settlements were destroyed. On one occasion, five hundred hermits who had developed the *jhānas* came to Āḷavaka's mansion from the Himalayan regions. But the ogres seized them and threw them across the river Ganges, and all five hundred were destroyed.¹

Therefore, all those who have encountered a Buddha-Sāsana in this life should work to rid themselves of evil in their future lives. They should work to establish such good states as the purification of virtue (*sīla-visuddhi*) so that it is permanently fixed. They should practise the foundations of mindfulness (*sati-*

¹Given in the commentary on the Āḷavaka-sutta of the Saṃyutta-nikāya (I 213ff.). The *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names* (under *Āḷavaka* [2], referring to Sutta-nipāta Commentary 228) says when ascetics saw the *yakkha's* glittering palace, they would often stop to find out what it was. When they could not answer Āḷavaka's questions, he would drive them mad.

paṭṭhāna) and arouse the type of energy that is included in the right efforts (*sammappadhāna*) in order to destroy the latent predisposition to belief in a permanent self. Working in this way, they will free themselves from their infatuation with phenomena (*sammoha-dhamma*) which can cast them into the utter darkness of the absence of wisdom and which can root out all feelings of respect and veneration that they have harboured for the infinite, noble qualities of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Ariya Saṅgha, and for the establishments of the Sāsana. Otherwise, their infatuation will efface all this, leaving no trace of them in future lives. They should work to rid themselves of the wrong doctrines (*micchā-dhamma*) which in past lives led them to approach, respect and venerate all manner of spurious Buddhas due to their inability to recognize the true Buddha, the true Dhamma, and the true Saṅgha. They should work in the way we have described in order to attain firmly established faith (*adhigama-saddhā*) and firmly established wisdom (*adhigama-paññā*) which will enable them to continue to evoke respect and veneration for the true Buddha, the true Dhamma, and the true Saṅgha without any hindrance. They should work to make all this stable.

THE FIVE TYPES OF SUCCESS. If we work correctly we will come to realize the true nature of material and mental phenomena and we will realize the Four Noble Truths. Ven. Ledi Sayadaw discusses these as the five accomplishments (*siddhi*) or five successes (*iddhi*). We must succeed by carrying out our work successfully (*ijjhanam iddhi*).

The first type of success is the accomplishment of special knowledge concerning phenomena which should be fully known

(*abhiññeyyesu dhammesu abhiññā-siddhi*). This includes knowing material phenomena (*rūpa*) and mental phenomena (*nāma*). It means knowing the ultimate truths (*paramattha-dhamma*) which we were ignorant of when we were without any contact with a Buddha-Sāsana. A thorough knowledge of *A Manual of Abhidhamma* (*Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha*), which is a résumé of the essential doctrines of the Abhidhamma, will enable us to carry to completion this accomplishment.

The second type of success is the accomplishment of understanding phenomena that should be experienced (*pariññeyyesu dhammesu pariññā-siddhi*). This includes the Noble Truth of Suffering (*dukkha-sacca*).

The third type of success is the accomplishment of abandoning phenomena which should be abandoned (*pahātabbesu dhammesu pahānā-siddhi*). This includes the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering (*samudaya-sacca*). This means we should abandon and destroy the defilements (*kilesa*) which are the cause of suffering. For those who are still ordinary persons and who are working to reach the lowest class of Stream-Winners, namely the *Bon-sin-san sotāpannas*, the accomplishment of abandoning means completing the task of destroying the wrong view that there is a permanent self. Dispelling sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*) is included in the task of overcoming the belief that we have an eternal self.

The fourth type of success is the accomplishment of realizing phenomena that should be experienced (*sacchikātabbesu dhammesu sacchikiriya-siddhi*). This includes the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*nirodha-sacca*). Here too the defilements are to be suppressed and destroyed.

The fifth type of success is the accomplishment of the mental development concerning phenomena which should be developed mentally (*bhāvetabbesu dhammesu bhāvanā-siddhi*). This includes the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*magga-sacca*). This means following the three trainings (*sikkhā*) which include the Eightfold Path of virtue (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*), until we attain the Supramundane Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*lokuttara-magga-sacca*).

Types of success can also include success in the various purifications (*visuddhi*). There are four precepts of purity (*catu-pārisuddhi-sīla*):

- (1) the virtue of restraint through the Pātimokkha,
- (2) restraint of the sense faculties,
- (3) restraint through the purification of livelihood, and
- (4) the restraint with regards to the requisites.

The first and last of these apply to bhikkhus, of course. These four types of success come under the purity of virtue (*sīla-visuddhi*). There are eight attainments (*samāpatti*) in the domain of purity of mind (*citta-visuddhi*): the four *jhānas*, the sphere of boundless space, the sphere of boundless consciousness, the sphere of nothingness, and the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. These are developed in connection with either preparatory concentration (*kamma-samādhi*) or neighbourhood concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*). Other types of success in the area of mental discipline include the five mundane higher powers (*lokiya abhiññā*) such as the supernormal powers (*iddhividha-abhiññā*). There is one type of success included under the

purification of wisdom (*paññā-visuddhi*): the purification of right view (*diṭṭhi-visuddhi*).

These are the types of success that can be accomplished during a Buddha-Sāsana. In the next talk based on Ven. Ledi Sayadaw's discussion of the Requisites of Awakening, we will examine the bases of success (*iddhi-pāda*) and the remaining requisites.

The Requisites of Awakening, IV

*Yathā agāraṃ ducchannaṃ vuṭṭhī samativijjhati,
evaṃ abhāvitaṃ cittaṃ rāgo samativijjhati.*

*Yathā agāraṃ succhannaṃ vuṭṭhī na samativijjhati,
evaṃ subhāvitaṃ cittaṃ rāgo na samativijjhati.*

Just as rain penetrates into a house with a poor roof,
desire penetrates into the mind that is not developed.

Just as rain does not penetrate into a house with a
good roof, desire does not penetrate into the mind that
is highly developed.

Dhammapada, vv. 13, 14

THE FOUR BASES OF SUCCESS. In these talks based on Ven. Ledi Sayadaw's *Requisites of Enlightenment*, we have discussed the Four Foundations of Mindfulness and the Four Right Efforts. Now let us look at the Four Bases of Success (*iddhipāda*). These four are:

- (1) *Chandiddhipāda*, the basis of success through zeal, resolution, desire (for liberation).
- (2) *Viriyyiddhipāda*, the basis of success through exertion, energy, effort.
- (3) *Cittiddhipāda*, the basis of success through thought (directed towards liberation).

- (4) *Vīmaṃsiddhipāda*, the basis of success through investigation.

The first basis of success, *chanda*, includes the desire to obtain, to attain, to reach, to fulfil, to accomplish. This means the right kind of desire of the highest order. It is the kind of desire which cannot be obstructed by anything within or without one's personality. This kind of desire leads one to think, "If I do not attain this accomplishment in this life, I will not rest content. It is better that I die rather than that I should not attain it."

This sort of desire was nurtured by King Dhammasoṇḍa of Benares during the time of the Buddha Kassapa, the Buddha who preceded Gotama. King Dhammasoṇḍa said to himself, "What is the use of my being the king of Benares if I do not have the opportunity of hearing a discourse of the Buddha Kassapa?" Therefore, he gave up his throne and went in search of someone who could repeat a discourse given by the Buddha Kassapa, even if the discourse was only one short stanza.¹

Desire like this will be appeased if it is fulfilled. Such was the case for King Bimbisāra, Mother Visākhā, and Anāthapiṇḍika during the time of the Buddha Gotama.² It is only when there are some indications that the desire can be attained but in actual fact turns out not to be fulfilled that the mind is troubled. Then, one thinks that it is better to die than to live without attaining this desire.

¹ King Dhammasoṇḍa's story is found in the *Rasavāhinī* (see the *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names* II 1351f.).

² See *Illustrator of Ultimate Meaning* (Paramatthajotikā), pp. 223ff., and the *Dhammapada* commentary (*Buddhist Legends* I 147).

Other examples of this kind of desire are found in the stories of the past lives of the Buddha when he was King Temiya and King Hatthipāla,¹ and in the examples of the kings, nobles, and rich men during Buddha Gotama's time who gave up their palaces, retinues and other luxuries to live as bhikkhus in the Buddha-Sāsana.

We can consider ourselves extremely fortunate to be alive at a time when we can hear much more than just a short stanza of the Buddha's Teachings. And conditions are favourable for us to put his Teachings into practice. There is no need, therefore, for us to feel that it would be better if we were to die, for the desire to encounter the Buddha-Dhamma and to fulfil the Teachings can be accomplished here and now.

The second basis of success, *virīya*, means putting forth energy to make the right effort (*sammappadhāna*). This includes the Four Right Efforts that were explained in the second talk on the Requisites of Awakening: overcoming past and present unwholesome states; avoiding future unwholesome states; making unarisen wholesome states arise; and developing existing wholesome states. A person who can make this sort of exertion is infused with the thought that the aim can be attained through energy and effort. He is not discouraged either when he is told he will have to undergo great hardships nor if he actually has to undergo such hardships. Being told it will take effort put forth for days, months, and years, or actually making such an effort does not discourage him.

Those who are weak in energy recoil from their task when they are confronted with work which requires great energy and

¹Jātakas n°s 538, 509.

effort. They shrink back when they are told they will have to stay apart from friends and associates. They shrink from the prospect of having to be frugal in the time they spend sleeping and in the amount of food they eat. They shrink from the prospect of long periods of concentration. They resemble “white dogs that dare not venture into thickets.” White dogs are afraid to enter a mass of reeds that is no more than a foot and a half high because they think the reeds may harbour leopards, tigers, and elephants.

Through coming to a ten-day meditation course, we show that we are able to live separated from our friends. And through following the programme here, we are frugal in our sleep and the food we eat. By coming to the hours of meditation, we show that we do not shrink from long periods spent working to concentrate our minds.

The third basis of success, *citta*, literally means “consciousness”. In this context, it means a mind that is attached to succeeding as soon as one comes into contact with the Dispensation of the Buddha (Buddha-Sāsana) and hears the Dhamma taught. This attachment is extremely ardent and strong.

Because of one’s attachment to succeeding, one is not distracted, even if one is surrounded by the beauties and luxuries of the world, by power and fortune, and even studying books on the Dhamma will not be a distraction from practising the Dhamma. One attains satisfaction and tranquillity only when one’s mind is absorbed in matters connected with the bases of success. It is like the absorption of an alchemist who is working to transform the baser metals into gold or silver. He will not be interested in anything outside his alchemy. He will forget to sleep or eat. He does not remember if he has slept or eaten. When he goes for a walk he does not notice anything. Thought as

a basis for success means great absorption or attachment of this nature.

As we practise *ānāpāna* and *vipassanā*, every effort we make to bring back our attention when it wanders will help us to achieve the level of mental development that will be a firm base for further development and eventual success.

The fourth basis of success, *vīmaṃsā*, includes investigation of and understanding of the things we must avoid and the things we must work on in order to succeed. It is the knowledge or wisdom that can clearly perceive the magnitude of the sufferings of the lower realms and the sufferings involved in continual rebirths. It is knowledge that can clearly perceive the advantages and benefits of the bases of success. Such knowledge can dwell on the deep and difficult Dhammas and on their nature. A person who possesses this knowledge no longer finds pleasure in any worldly pursuit. His only satisfaction is in the pursuit of the bases of success. He finds gratification only in acquiring deep and profound success. The deeper and more profound the Dhammas, the greater is his desire to attain them.

We strive for a high level of concentration here in order that we will be able to make this kind of investigation. Through experiencing *anicca*, we gain insight into and knowledge of the deepest, most profound aspects of reality. Thus, our meditation practice is the best way to achieve the last of the four bases of success.

Everyone who is capable of following a ten-day course of meditation possesses the four bases of success to a greater or lesser extent. Being firmly established in any one of the four bases of success means that a person can attain the supramundane power (*lokuttara-iddhi*), either in his present life, or in his

next lifetime as a *deva*. The rate of success depends on his *pāramīs*, the perfections that have been developed in past lives and which are being developed in this lifetime. So there is no need for *vipassanā* students to say that they are unable to put forth the necessary effort. They will be able to establish contemplation of the body (*kāyagatā-sati*) and the higher stages of the Teachings such as the seven purifications (*visuddhi*).

Some people, of course, do not possess any of the four bases of success. They are unable to distinguish between what is shallow and what is profound in life, between superficial and profound expositions of the Dhamma. But they too can work to develop at least one of the four bases of success. If they maintain that they are unable to do so, this is the same as saying they are on the road to the lower realms of misery. They should study and ponder the discourses of the Buddha that can arouse zeal (*chanda*). They should seek out a teacher who can arouse zeal and rely on him.

If a person does not even try to attain one of the four bases of success, he is admitting defeat. Thus, everyone should work to establish contemplation of the body, which can be obtained through *ānāpāna*, for this will then be a basis for success. The discourses that convey a sense of urgency (*saṃvega*) concerning the dangers in continued rebirth can be studied. Working to practice the Dhamma will arouse energy. And progress can be made in investigation of the Dhamma through studying such profound subjects as the Four Major Elements (*mahā-bhūta*).

A person who possesses none of the four bases of success resembles a pauper's son who can never aspire to become an emperor. Those who possess at least one of the bases of success resemble the sons of an emperor who can aspire to one day

become emperor, for they possess the basis for doing so. Therefore, all of us should work to develop the four bases of success in order to destroy the belief in a controlling personality and to acquire during this Buddha Dispensation the benefits of the higher attainments according to the *pāramīs* we have developed in the past.

THE FIVE CONTROLLING FACULTIES. The next group of requisites are the Five Controlling Faculties (*indriya*).¹ The faculties control in the way a ruler controls, for wherever a ruler holds sway, no one can go against him. As Requisites for Awakening, the faculties are necessary for one to exercise control over his mind.

The five controlling faculties are:

- (1) *Saddhindriya*, the faculty of faith;
- (2) *Viriya*, the faculty of energy;
- (3) *Satindriya*, the faculty of mindfulness;
- (4) *Samādhindriya*, the faculty of concentration;
- (5) *Paññindriya*, the faculty of wisdom.

There are two kinds of faith (*saddhā*): (1) ordinary faith (*pakati-saddhā*) and (2) faith through mental development (*bhāvanā-saddhā*).

Ordinary faith or confidence leads ordinary men and women to acts of generosity, to keeping the precepts and to "imitation" mental development. Ordinary faith is the faith of those who resemble the madman mentioned in connection with the Foun-

¹Some of Ven. Ledi Sayadaw's remarks concerning the development of the faculties for those practising *samatha* are not included here as this talk is for students practising *vipassanā* after having a lesser degree of concentration.

dations of Mindfulness. They are not even able to keep their minds on the texts they recite due to their lack of control over their minds. Thus, they end up with only the external manifestation of the recitation.

There is a certain amount of control for those who have ordinary faith. Ordinary faith can result in ordinary wholesome actions such as generosity (*dāna*), virtuous living (*sīla*), and the study of Dhamma texts. If there were no faith, the mind would never tend towards wholesome volitional actions as it ordinarily only delights in evil acts.

Ordinary faith, however, is not sufficient for practising the meditation subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*). As there is not enough control over the mind, the mind is apt to react to and rebound off that faith and proceed elsewhere.

Faith through mental development prepares the seed bed, so to speak, for acquiring great strength and power in practising such meditation subjects as observing the in-breath and out-breath, etc. Therefore, when it comes to the Requisites of Awakening, the controlling faculty of faith is faith through mental development. Its presence can be recognized when working on the meditation subject through the disappearance of unstable and oscillating mental attention and the appearance of a clear and steady mind. The mind's attention can only be steadily fixed on those objects which it finds to be clear and unhazy. When the mind is occupied with observing the in-breath and out-breath, that amounts to attaining faith through mental development.

If one carries the work further and develops calm (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*), the ability to destroy the wrong view that there is a controlling self can be acquired during this present

lifetime. In order to carry out the work of calm and insight, one must rely on a teacher who is very learned in the Dhamma.

If you are able to gain a fair degree of concentration through *ānāpāna* and if you can work on insight through *vipassanā*, then you possess the necessary faith through mental development. You have no doubt seen through your own experience that the better your concentration and the better your appreciation of *anicca*, the stronger your faith is in the Buddha-Dhamma. At other times, when your concentration wavers and it is difficult to experience *anicca*, then the doubts come which make it hard to continue to work.

The second controlling faculty is energy (*virīya*). As with faith, there are two kinds, or degrees, of *virīya*: (1) ordinary energy (*pakati-virīya*) and (2) energy through mental development (*bhāvanā-virīya*). Or, it can be classified as (1) bodily energy (*kāyika-virīya*) and (2) mental energy (*cetasika-virīya*).

Ordinary energy can be easily recognized. A person who possesses much ordinary energy can easily attain energy through mental development. Bhikkhus who observe the ascetic practices (*dhutaṅga*)¹ which are not obligatory for all bhikkhus develop bodily energy (*kāyika-virīya-bhāvanā*).

At times, a person can make the effort to develop bodily energy through reducing sleep and being alert and energetic, and yet, there will be no mental energy. Mental energy includes enthusiasm in keeping the attention on mental development

¹The ascetic practices of (1) only eating alms' food (*piṇḍapātikaṅga*), (2) never lying down (*nesājjiṅga*), (3) living at the foot of a tree (*rukka-mūlikaṅga*), (4) living in the open air (*abbhokāsikaṅga*), and (5) living in a cemetery (*sosānikaṅga*).

(*bhāvanā-manasikāra*), steady application to or concentration on the subject of meditation such as the in-breath and out-breath. If this mental energy cannot be attained, then the period of work is unduly lengthened without the achievement of clarity of mind and perception.

Whatever work a person is doing will be properly and appropriately done only if the person doing it obtains quick mastery over it. It will be improperly done if the work gains mastery over the person. When work gains mastery, the task is done without real energy. As a result, no concrete results appear. For a meditator, days and months drag on. He develops distaste for meditation, and tedium in body postures appears, leading to sluggishness. With the appearance of sluggishness, progress in the work slows down. The more the work slows down, the more sluggishness there is. Then one begins to think that it would be better to change the form of the work. If a person gives in and constantly changes the form of work, that is an example of the work obtaining mastery over a person lacking energy.

When meditating, quick success will be obtained only by those who are endowed with both bodily and mental energy. As soon as contemplation of the body is established, as we do in *ānāpāna*, then energy through mental development will grow from day to day. This is the kind of energy that is a controlling faculty. When this kind of energy is developed, sluggishness and laziness in keeping to the meditation subject disappears and we find in their place enthusiasm and energy. The mind takes delight in dwelling on objects when its attention is strong. Thus, the task of establishing energy through mental development and making gradual progress are identical with the Controlling Faculty of Energy.

The third Controlling Faculty is mindfulness (*sati*). As a requisite of Awakening, it means establishing mindfulness in contemplation of the body (*kāyagatā-sati*). Awareness of the in-breath and out-breath is an example of this. It also includes mindfulness through mental development (*bhāvanā-sati*), which is the application of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) that includes developing insight. These must be developed until the Path of Supramundane Right Mindfulness (*lokuttara-sammā-sati-magga*) is reached.

The fourth and fifth controlling faculties of concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) may be similarly defined and described. The Controlling Faculty of Concentration dispels the distraction of the mind when it is applied in the work of the application of mindfulness on such an object as the mindfulness of breathing. The Controlling Faculty of Wisdom dispels confusion and haziness.

Ashin Buddhaghosa, in the *Visuddhimagga*, points out that there must be a correct balance between faith and wisdom and between energy and concentration if progress is to be made.¹ If there is an excess of faith and wisdom is deficient, blind faith will be the result. Excess wisdom and deficient faith will result in cunning. If energy is great and concentration is weak, then restlessness will occur. If concentration is strong, but energy is deficient, then there will be indolence. Mindfulness, on the other hand, should be allowed to develop to the highest degree.

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw points out that the Controlling Faculties of Faith, Energy and Mindfulness precede those of Concentration and Wisdom, raising them higher and higher until the highest

¹ *Path of Purification*, Chapter IV ¶¶45–49.

excellence is attained. They are like the qualities which raise a king to kingship.

For meditators like us, who continue on to *vipassanā* as soon as contemplation of the body and adequate mastery over the mind is established, the Controlling Faculty of Concentration leads to concentration on the lack of a controlling self (*suññata-samādhī*), concentration on the unconditioned (*animatta-samādhī*) and concentration free from all longings (*appaṇihita-samādhī*). The Controlling Faculty of Wisdom leads to the five purifications pertaining to wisdom (*paññā-visuddhī*):

- (1) purification of view,
- (2) purification by overcoming doubt,
- (3) purification by knowledge and vision of what is the Path and what is not the Path,
- (4) purification by knowledge and vision of the way, and
- (5) purification by knowledge and vision.

It also leads to the contemplation of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) and the lack of a controlling self (*anattā*) and to the ten insight knowledges (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*). These are:

- (1) insight into the three characteristics of existence,
- (2) insight into the rising and passing away of phenomena,
- (3) insight into the passing away of phenomena,
- (4) insight into the fearful condition,
- (5) insight into the faulty condition,
- (6) insight into the wearisome condition,
- (7) insight arising from the desire to escape,
- (8) insight arising out of further contemplation, and
- (9) insight arising from equanimity, and
- (10) adaptation knowledge.

Finally,² it leads to the four Paths and four Fruition States and to the reviewing knowledges associated with them.

Each of the Five Controlling Faculties can serve as a predominant factor. The faculty of faith (*saddhā*) predominates in the four components of Stream-Entry. A *sotāpanna*

- (1) has unshakeable faith¹ in the noble qualities of the Buddha, that he is an Arahāt, a Teaching Buddha, perfect in knowledge and practice, etc.;
- (2) has unshakeable faith in the noble qualities of the Dhamma, that it is well proclaimed by the Exalted One, to be seen in this very life, a thing not involving time, inviting one to come and see, leading on, to be known for themselves by the wise;
- (3) has unshakeable faith in the noble qualities of the Saṅgha, that it is of good conduct ..., that those who have attained the four Paths and the four Fruition States are worthy of honour, of reverence, of offerings, of having respects paid to them—a field of merit unsurpassed for the world;
- (4) and he is possessed of the foundation of supramundane concentration, the foundation consisting in the virtues loved by the noble—virtues which are unbroken, whole, unspotted, untarnished, giving freedom, praised by the wise.

¹See *Kindred Sayings*, V, 296–351. The word in the Pāḷi texts is *aveccapāsāda*, which can be translated as “perfect faith.” Other meanings of *pāsāda* include, “joy, satisfaction, happy or good mind, virtue; repose, composure, serenity.”

These four components ensure the attainment of the knowledge of the path of Stream-Entry (*sotāpatti-magga-ñāṇa*) in this present life. “Unshakeable faith” in this context means the faith of those who have attained the steady, fixed attention of access concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*) while reflecting on the noble qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha. The virtue which serves as the foundation for supramundane concentration means permanent virtue with right livelihood as the eighth precept (*ājīvaṭṭhamaka-nicca-sīla*). When such virtue is unbroken and pure, it is free from the defilements: craving (*taṇhā*), conceit or pride (*māna*), and wrong view (*diṭṭhi*). Faith is prominent in such virtue. If such virtue is observed while living in ordinary worldly conditions, it is said to be “impure,” even though it may be technically unbroken.

Laymen and bhikkhus who consider themselves to be followers of the Buddha cannot know whether the turbulence and distractions latent in their minds have disappeared or not, that is to say, whether they have obtained mastery over their minds, until they reach these four components of Stream-entry. It is like the Burmese saying, “the worth of a bull can be known only when it comes up from the bed of the stream to the banks.” As long as one is still submerged like the bull in the stream, it is impossible to see one’s true nature. Just as the bull is clearly visible when he emerges from the stream, so too a person can clearly see how far they have progressed when confronted with these four components.

The stream beds in Myanmar are very muddy when the water is shallow, and if you walk along them, you have to make a great effort to pull your legs out of the mud. If the water level is high, then you can swim.

In this connection, I would like to draw attention to Sayagyi's experience when he first went to Saya Thet Gyi's village to learn how to meditate. He first had to cross the Yangon river in a sampan and then go up a small tributary. As it was low tide, he had to disembark half way to his destination and walk up the river bed in thick mud, his legs sinking in up to his knees. If you try to imagine the difficulty he had, you can appreciate that he was like a valuable bull. How eager he was to get the Dhamma!

We can see whether the faculty of energy or effort (*viriya*) is predominant by comparing our efforts to the four right exertions (*sammappadhāna*):

- (1) the restraint of the senses,
- (2) the abandoning of unskilful thoughts,
- (3) the practice of mental development, and
- (4) the guarding of virtue.

Such exertion will calm the unsettled, turbulent mind.

In its highest expression, this is the kind of effort that enables one to say, "May only my skin, sinews and bones remain; may my blood dry up. I will not rest until the realms of belief in a permanent self, of wrong actions, and of continued rebirth in the lower realms are destroyed." When this kind of effort can be made without the mind being unsettled or turbulent, then energy (*viriya*) is predominant. If a person tries to make such an effort before they are able to maintain a calm mind, they will not be able to make progress, however. It is important that we be honest with ourselves, and recognize just how much effort we can make. Balanced effort will lead to the ability to summon this high level of energy when the right time comes. But an excess of

physical energy before we are ready may result in our becoming discouraged.

We can see whether the faculty of mindfulness (*sati*) is predominant by comparing our level of mindfulness with the four Foundations of Mindfulness (*sati-paṭṭhāna*): mindfulness of (1) the body, (2) sensations, (3) the mind, and (4) mental phenomena. If the attention can be kept fixed on a part of the body, such as the out-breath and in-breath, for as long as one desires, then the control over the mind has been achieved.

The faculty of concentration (*samādhi*) is predominant when one is able to attain the *jhāna* states. The technique we are following here does not put the emphasis on *jhāna* states, however. We are working for mental development with access concentration (*upacāra-samādhi-bhāvanā*). With access concentration, it is possible to remove the five hindrances of sensual desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and remorse, and sceptical doubt. These hindrances have run riot in our minds during our past lives continuously. But once they are removed, the mind becomes especially steady and tranquil. If we can attain that level of concentration, then it will be a predominant factor.

We can see whether the faculty of wisdom (*paññā*) is predominant by comparing our understanding with the Four Noble Truths. We are working for this insight through knowing *anicca*. If the nature of impermanence (*anicca*) can be clearly realized, the realization of the lack of a permanent self (*anattā*) follows as a matter of course. Our task is to experience the sensations in our body as *anicca*. This will lead eventually to a full understanding of suffering (*dukkha*), the origin of suffering, the end of suffering, and the path leading to the end of suffering. The complete

realization of the nature of suffering, however, will not come until we attain the Fruition State of an Arahāt.

We must make an effort over a long period of time in order to gain insight into the impermanence of all conditioned phenomena. When we do, wisdom (*paññā*) will be a predominant factor. Gradually, the unreliability of our minds will disappear. For countless lives in the past, our minds have taken impermanent things to be permanent, suffering to be happiness, loathsome things to be pleasant, non-self to be self, non-individuals to be individuals, non-beings to be beings, non-humans to be humans, etc. Our minds will be free from unreliability when we perceive true reality after having gained mastery over the mind within the Buddha-Sāsana.

Once the first Noble Truth, the truth of suffering, is clearly perceived, the other three will be understood as a matter of course. Ordinary people can have a theoretical understanding of them. Those who have become Noble persons, on the other hand, such as Stream-Winners, etc., have penetrative understanding (*pañvedha*). Theoretical knowledge is like seeing a light at night but not the fire from which it originates. Even though the fire is not directly seen, by seeing the reflected light, one can know without doubt that there is a fire. Seeing the fire directly is like penetrative understanding.

The five aggregates (*khanda*), which are a coming together temporarily of the physical elements, the sensations, the perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness, for a person who has not developed the five controlling faculties are like a country without a ruler or king. They are like forests and mountains inhabited by wild tribes where no administration exists. In a rulerless country there is no law. There, the people are unre-

strained. The strong prey on the weak like animals. In the same way, the mind of a person who has not developed the five controlling faculties is distracted and runs riot with defilements. Just as a person possessed by evil spirits cannot bear to hear the sound of the Buddha's discourses being recited, when people without developed controlling faculties hear talk connected with how to be contented with little or talk about practising mental development, they quickly find fault and arguments against. The desire to exert themselves in developing calm and insight never arises in them.

On the other hand, the aggregates of a person who develops the five controlling faculties resemble a country ruled by a just and lawful king or the towns and villages of districts where governmental administration exists. Such a person is not disturbed by the various theories of other people. He is confirmed in the following of the Buddha's Teachings and no other. When such a person hears talk about being contented with little or talk about developing the mind, his mind is clear and cool. He is confirmed in the desire to exert himself in the work on calm and insight.

So we can see that the desire to work for liberation or the desire to continue to be negligent do not depend on individuals because what we commonly call an individual is only a combination of the five aggregates. The choice between the two sorts of desire depends on whether the five controlling faculties have been developed or not. If they are not developed, desires which work against liberation arise. If they are developed, harmful desires of this sort disappear and a new kind of desire invariably appears. The more the five controlling faculties are developed, the stronger this new desire which tends towards liberation

becomes. Once the five controlling faculties are firmly established, the desire for the Paths and Fruition States will immediately appear. This is how the ordinary faculties can be raised to the great heights of faculties which are associated with mental development.

THE FIVE MENTAL POWERS. The Five Mental Powers (*bala*) are the same qualities that are Controlling Faculties. As faculties, these qualities enable us to exercise control over the mind. As mental powers, they overpower opposing mental states. The commentaries speak of them as being powerful because they are unshaken by opposition. There are five unwholesome mental states opposing the five powers (*paṭipakkha-akusala-dhammā*). They are:

- (1) craving (*taṇhā*),
- (2) laziness (*kosajja*), or the inability to take pains, or lack of fearlessness in practising the Dhamma (*paṭipatti*),
- (3) absent mindedness (*muṭṭha-sacca*),
- (4) distraction (*vikkhepa*), and
- (5) delusion (*sammoha*).

The Five Mental Powers of (1) faith (*saddhā*), (2) energy (*virīya*), (3) mindfulness (*sati*), (4) concentration (*saṃādhi*), and (5) wisdom (*paññā*) are like five generals or commanders engaged in destroying the hostile kingdom of belief in a permanent self. Each of the five, as for the faculties, exists in an ordinary sense, but is not strong enough as such to combat the opposing forces. Only when the powers are strengthened through mental development can they be considered Requisites of Awakening.

Ordinary faith which has not been developed associates with craving (*taṇhā*) whenever circumstances are favourable. Thus, it can only produce the ordinary good actions of generosity, virtue, etc. It cannot overcome craving and remains under craving's power.

The four traditional practices of the Noble Ones, if followed by ordinary people, can combat craving. They are:

- (1) being easily satisfied with food,
- (2) being easily satisfied with clothing,
- (3) being easily satisfied with any dwelling place,
- (4) finding pleasure and enjoyment in mental development.

These four practices constitute the realm of faith. But in the world of today, this great kingdom of faith lies hidden and submerged. Today, beings take pleasure in and enjoy material things, worldly rank, dignity, and honour, and the attainment of a pleasant life, and of worldly riches and power. Due to this, the great kingdom of craving is established as clearly as the ocean around an island. So we can see how weak ordinary faith is in this world.

Faith through mental development, which will become a mental power and thus a Requisite of Awakening, can be acquired through the successful practice of contemplation of the body. This we do through *ānāpāna*. And we must continue this until the distractions and unsettled conditions of the mind disappear and craving which takes pleasure in worldliness can be dispelled. Only this can save us from being drowned in the ocean of craving for sensual objects, continued existence, and for self-annihilation. Through right development of our minds, we will

be able to reach the island haven of the kingdom of faith embodied in the traditional practices of the Noble Ones.

Ordinary energy associates with laziness when the occasion presents itself and is subject to it. Ordinary energy only produces ordinary good acts such as generosity, virtue, the study of the Dhamma texts, etc. If we are to develop energy to the stage of a mental power, we should cultivate the four traditional practices of the Noble Ones, and especially the fourth, finding pleasure and enjoyment in developing the mind, for this one is the most effective in dispelling laziness.¹

The antithesis of mindfulness is forgetfulness, confused- or absent-mindedness (*mutṭhasacca*). This means that one is unable to become absorbed in developing calm or insight; one cannot concentrate or control one's mind. Thoughts wander to objects which are not the object of concentration. Ordinary mindfulness, which one possesses in a rudimentary state from birth cannot dispel that absent-mindedness. Only mindfulness developed through control over the mind can do so.

The antithesis of concentration is distraction, perplexity or confusion (*vikkhepa*). This means one is unable to concentrate. The mind is unquiet and restless when one is trying to develop attention (*bhāvanā-manasikāra*). It is the arising of thoughts about objects other than the object of concentration. The mind cannot be controlled and attention cannot be fixed on one object. Ordinary concentration cannot dispel the unwholesome voli-

¹Ven. Ledi Sayadaw's remarks concerning the dispelling of laziness and present-day evidence of a lack of energy mainly concern bhikkhus and are not included here.

tional action of distraction. Only concentration through development of the mind can do so.

The antithesis of wisdom is delusion, bewilderment or infatuation (*sammoha*). It is ignorance, lack of clarity, fogginess and absence of light in the mind. It is the darkness shrouding the mind. This delusion cannot be removed by ordinary wisdom or by being proficient in the texts (*pariyatti-paññā*), even though one may know all three collections of the texts (Piṭakas). Only wisdom through mental development can establish mindfulness in contemplation of the body which can gradually dispel delusion.

If any of the five Mental Powers are weak and unable to dispel their opposites, work on calm or insight cannot be very successful for individuals in need of guidance (*neyya*).

It is important to develop all five of the Mental Powers. If only one or even several are developed, one will not be able to reach the goal. Today, some people can come out of the realm of craving because of the strength of their Power of Faith. They are not attached to material things or to worldly dignities and honours. But they are unable to rise above the stage of contentment (*santuṭṭhi*) with their living conditions because they are deficient in the other four powers.

Others can overcome craving and laziness because they are strong in the Powers of Faith and Energy. But they are unable to practise mindfulness through contemplation of the body or to develop calm or insight because they are weak in the other three powers. Those who add to the first two powers strength in mindfulness are able to be mindful through contemplation of the body but cannot attain the *jhānas* nor work on insight. If strength in

concentration is added to the first three powers, then the *jhānas* may be reached, but insight will not be possible.

Some people are strong in the last of the powers, wisdom, only in so far as being learned in the Dhamma and the three collections of the Teachings (Tipiṭaka), and even in understanding intellectually the Teachings on the ultimate realities (*paramattha-dhamma*). But they lack the support of the other four powers and therefore cannot come out of their craving, lassitude, absent-mindedness and distraction. They live and die, dominated by these unwholesome states. If any one of the Five Mental Powers is deficient, a person will not be able to rise above the realm of the respective opposing force.

Energy and wisdom are Bases of Success as well as Mental Powers. So, if these two powers are strong and co-ordinated, weakness in the other three powers will not keep a person from being able to do the work of insight (*vipassanā*).

An example of how effective these two powers can be is that fifty million five hundred thousand lay people in the city of Sāvattthi gained release from mundane ills during the time of the Buddha.¹ Ven. Ledi Sayadaw said in the early twentieth century that the traditional practices of the Noble Ones were on the verge of disappearing. This is because people did not understand the functions of the Bases of Success (*iddhipāda*), the Controlling

¹Sayagyi U Ba Khin refers to this number in the "Essentials of Buddha-Dhamma in Meditation Practice." In the commentary on the Sutta-nipāta (I 371), 180 million people are mentioned (see *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names* II 1127). Sāvattthi was the capital of Kosala and one of the six great cities of India during the lifetime of the Buddha. Ashin Buddhaghosa says that Sāvattthi was the capital of two countries: Kāsi-Kosala (Samantapāsādikā, III 614), so 180 million may refer to both countries.

Faculties (*indriya*) and the Mental Powers (*bala*). Thus, they did not understand why their zeal was weak, nor did they understand the opposing forces (*paṭipakkha*) assailing them. And as they did not know the mental states which they needed to cultivate, the desire to cultivate them could never arise. It is very important, therefore, that we understand our work correctly, and that once we have understood intellectually that we put into practice what we know.

THE EXAMPLE OF THE SPECIAL BULL. Ven. Ledi Sayadaw gives the example of a special species of bull (*usabha*). It is worth more than a thousand or ten thousand ordinary bulls. If the characteristics and distinctive signs of that bull are recognized and it is reared and nurtured properly, its limbs and marks will develop and its strength and powers will increase. It can then guard even a hundred cattle pens from the incursions of lions and leopards. The cattle in the enclosures where such a bull exists will be free from major diseases and epidemics. People living in houses round the stockade, up to the seventh house in each direction, will be free from major diseases and epidemics. Like the bull Nandivīsāla in the Jātakas (n° 28), it can pull even five hundred carts at one time.

If the owner of such a bull is ignorant of all this and does not rear and nurture it properly but keeps and tends it just as he would any other ordinary bull, employing it in ploughing and drawing carts with other bulls, its distinctive marks and limbs will fail to develop and its strength and powers will remain dormant. It will thus live and die like any other bull.

A knowledgeable owner, however, will separate such a bull from the rest and keep it in a specially constructed shed. He will

cover the floor of the shed with clean sand and will fix a ceiling to the roof. He will keep the shed clean and will feed the bull with rice and pulses fit for human consumption. He will wash and bathe it. In such a case, the distinctive marks and limbs will develop, and its strength and powers will increase enormously.

In this Buddha-Sāsana, individuals who need guidance (*neyya*) resemble the owner of the bull. Their five Mental Powers resemble the bull. The Dhamma texts explaining the doctrine and how to work for Nibbāna resemble the books that explain the distinctive signs, marks, and characteristics by which one can recognize such a special bull, and the methods for raising and caring for such bulls, and the strength and powers such bulls can attain.

Individuals in need of guidance who, out of ignorance, do not try to develop the five mental Powers through meditation but who are satisfied with the lower attainments of the Sāsana, such as generosity, virtue, and studying the texts, resemble the ignorant owner of a special bull who does not raise it and care for it properly.

In this world there are many kinds of worldly undertakings. Some can be accomplished by the strength of wealth and some by the strength of knowledge. Even in cultivating land several kinds of strength are needed. Sometimes the strength of wealth must be accumulated first, at others the strength of knowledge. Preparatory education and study are needed in order to accumulate knowledge.

Similarly, in the Buddha-Sāsana, five Mental Powers are needed for the work of calm, insight, and for the attainment of the Paths and Fruition States, and Nibbāna. Only when the Mental Powers are developed can these great tasks be under-

taken. People who do not possess even one of the Mental Powers cannot even evoke a desire to undertake such great tasks. It does not occur to them that such great tasks can be accomplished in this life. They live forgetfully and without determination. If it is pointed out to them that the tasks can be accomplished, they do not want to hear it. They do not know that such perverse thoughts occur to them because they are utterly impoverished in Mental Powers. They blame instead a lack of *pāramīs*, or say they do not have the necessary conditions or that these are unfavourable times.

But it is possible to accomplish these important tasks. If one begins with *ānāpāna*, the three Mental Powers of faith, energy, and mindfulness will be established and perverse thoughts like the ones mentioned will certainly disappear. It is inevitable that new wholesome thoughts must arise. This is because they have developed their strength.

This strength is developed even though such a person cannot yet attain insight into mind-and-body (*nāma-rūpa*). Weak faith grows through the control exercised over craving for material things and worldly achievements. Weak energy grows through control of lassitude. Weak mindfulness grows through control of absent-mindedness. Concentration and wisdom, too, gather strength through control of distraction and delusion. When these Mental Powers grow, it is inevitable that there must be a change in the mind of the meditator.

A person who is afflicted with a major disease has no desire to take an interest in the ordinary affairs and activities of the world. But if he takes proper medicine and receives treatment and the illness is gradually cured, he is then aroused from his apathy. This is inevitable. The five unwholesome forces opposing the

five Mental Powers resemble five major diseases. In the Buddha-Sāsana, work on the development of the mind through calm and insight resembles the affairs and activities of the world. Work in the field of the Foundations of Mindfulness, such as *ānāpāna*, resembles the taking of proper medicines and treatment. If one works, the opposing forces will be conquered.

A workman must have the proper tools in order to do his work successfully. Similarly, in the Buddha-Sāsana, the tools of the practice of calm and insight leading to success in the Knowledge of the Paths (*magga-ñāṇa*) and the Knowledge of the Fruition states (*phala-ñāṇa*) are (1) Faith through Mental Development (*bhāvanā-saddhā*), (2) Energy through Mental Development (*bhāvanā-viriya*), (3) Mindfulness through Mental Development (*bhāvanā-sati*), (4) Concentration through Mental Development (*bhāvanā-samādhi*), and (5) Wisdom through Mental Development (*bhāvanā-paññā*). These tools are developed through one of the Foundations of Mindfulness, such as *ānāpāna*. These five Mental Powers are the strength of the meditator (*yogāvacara*).

The Buddha said in reference to the meditator who is headed for Nibbāna: “He develops the Mental Powers of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and insight.”¹

*Saddhā-balaṃ bhāveti,
Viriya-balaṃ bhāveti,
Sati-balaṃ bhāveti,
Samādhi-balaṃ bhāveti,
Paññā-balaṃ bhāveti.*

¹Kindred Sayings V 223.

The remaining Requisites of Awakening are the Seven Factors of Awakening (*bojjhaṅga*) and the Eight Path Factors (*maggāṅga*) of the Noble Eightfold Path. In our last talk based on Ven. Ledi Sayadaw's Thirty-Seven Requisites of Awakening, we will discuss these and give his concluding general instructions.

The Requisites of Awakening, V

*Suññāgāraṃ paviṭṭhassa santa-cittassa bhikkhuno
amānusi rati hoti sammā dhammaṃ vipassato.*

*Yato yato sammasati khandhānaṃ udayabbayaṃ
labhati pīti-pāmojjaṃ amataṃ taṃ vijānataṃ.*

For the bhikkhu who enters a place of solitude, his mind tranquil, there is a pleasure surpassing human pleasure in clearly seeing the Dhamma as one ought to see it.

Just as soon as he grasps the rise and fall of the aggregates, he acquires joy and gladness, discerning thus the deathless (Nibbāna).

Dhammapada, vv. 373, 374

The last two groups in the Thirty-Seven Requisites of Awakening are the Seven Factors of Awakening (*bojjhaṅga*) and the Eight Path Factors (*maggaṅga*), also known as the Eightfold Noble Path.

THE SEVEN FACTORS OF AWAKENING. The Seven Factors of Awakening are:

- (1) Mindfulness (*sati-bojjhaṅga*)
- (2) Investigation of mental states (*dhamma-vicaya-bojjhaṅga*)¹
- (3) Energy (*virīya-bojjhaṅga*)
- (4) Joy (*pīti-bojjhaṅga*)
- (5) Tranquillity (*passaddhi-bojjhaṅga*)
- (6) Concentration (*samādhi-bojjhaṅga*)
- (7) Equanimity (*upekkhā-bojjhaṅga*).

These are the factors that enable us to become Awakened to the Four Noble Truths of suffering (*dukkha*), the cause of suffering, the end of suffering (Nibbāna), and the way to the end of suffering. This means going beyond the ordinary world and attaining the supramundane. When one is Awakened, Enlightened, there is Knowledge of the Supramundane Path (*lokuttara-magga-ñāṇa*).

¹Mrs. Rhys Davids explains the translation of this term in Shwe Zan Aung's translation of the Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha (*Compendium of Philosophy* 179, footnote 3): "In *dhammānupassana*, the word *dhamma*, according to the Ceylon Cy., refers to the fifty-one mental properties, or factors, exclusive of 'feeling' (*vedanā*), and the rendering of it by 'law', or any other term, would be quite wide of the mark; for these contemplation-exercises are with reference to one's own mind and body, and not with reference to any extra-personal object. But Ledi Sayadaw of Burma takes exception to the above universally accepted view, and says that *dhammā* here refers to (1) six *nīvaraṇa*'s; (2) five *khandha*'s; (3) twelve *āyatana*'s; (4) seven *bojjhaṅga*'s; and (5) four *ariya-sacca*'s. He bases his view on the fact that the Buddha himself spoke of these five categories as *dhammā*, but never of the *saññākkhandha* and the *saṅkārakkhandha* alone."

As you can see, when this stage is reached, there is the possibility of significant progress. Preparation through developing all the preceding requisites is indispensable. But it is also important to continue working when these Factors of Awakening are reached. Ven. Ledi Sayadaw gives an illustration. Birds are delivered first from their mothers' wombs in the form of eggs. Then they are delivered a second time by breaking out of the eggs. Finally, they are delivered from the nest when their feathers and wings are fully developed, and they can fly wherever they please.

Similarly, meditators on these courses are delivered from the distractions of mind which have followed them throughout their past births by establishing themselves in keeping the attention on the in-breath and the out-breath and the spot where the air touches. Next, they free themselves from the coarse forms of ignorance through insight (*vipassanā*), insight into the unstable nature of all sensations in the body (*anicca*). Eventually, when the Seven Factors of Awakening are developed and become mature, those same meditation students will be able to be delivered from the state of an ordinary person (*puthujjana*) and attain the state of a Noble One (Ariya), one who has reached the Supramundane, Nibbāna.

We have already discussed in some detail several of these seven factors in their preparatory roles: mindfulness, energy, and concentration. Another factor has been explained under a different name: investigation of mental states is the same as wisdom (*paññā*). The new elements here, therefore, are joy, tranquillity, and equanimity. But let us examine these Seven Factors of Awakening one by one.

Mindfulness is a mental factor (*sati-cetasika*) and as such, one of the fifty-two mental concomitants. In this role, it is present in lofty mental formations. The first group of Requisites of Awakening were the Four Foundations of Mindfulness, which shows how fundamental to all our work mindfulness is. Then we saw that it is one of the Controlling Faculties and one of the Mental Powers. Finally, we will meet it again as part of the Path leading to the goal, the Path Factor of Right Mindfulness (*sammā-sati-maggaṅga*).

The investigation of mental states has been encountered as wisdom (*paññā*). This is a mental factor in the fifty-two mental concomitants under the term “non-delusion” (*a-moha*). Wisdom is also known as the base of success in investigation (*vīmaṇ-siddhi-pāda*), and we have discussed it as a Controlling Faculty (*paññindriya*) and as a Mental Power. We will come to it again as the Path Factor of Right View (*sammā-diṭṭhi-maggaṅga*). Investigation of mental states can also be understood to include the last five of the seven purifications (called the *paññā-visuddhis*), the Knowledge of the Three Contemplations (of *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā*) (*anupassanā-ñāṇa*) and the ten kinds of Insight Knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*).¹ Another aspect of investigation of mental states is the repeated viewing of the five aggregates (*khandhas*) through Insight Knowledge. This resembles the way in which raw cotton is milled and carded to separate the seeds from the fibre.

Energy is also a mental factor (*virīya-cetasika*), one of the concomitants of a general psychological nature which is sometimes present in the consciousness. Energy is part of all the four

¹These are all discussed with the five Controlling Faculties.

Right Efforts (*sammappadhāna*). And we have discussed it as a Base of Success (*viriyiddhi-pāda*), a Controlling Faculty (*viriyindriya*), and a Mental Power (*viriya-bala*). Next we will meet it as the Path Factor of Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*).

The factor of Awakening of joy is the joy and happiness that appear when the process of seeing and knowing increases after the four Foundations of Mindfulness are set up through mindfulness of breathing.

The factor of Awakening of tranquillity is the process of becoming calm and tranquil in both body and mind when mental distractions, reflections, and thoughts abate. This is found in the mental concomitants as tranquillity of mental body (*kāya-passaddhi*)¹ and tranquillity of consciousness (*citta-passaddhi*).

The factor of awakening of concentration includes its aspects as a Controlling Faculty (*samādhindriya*) and as a Mental Power (*samādhī-bala*), which we have already discussed, and its aspects in the last group as the Path factor of right concentration (*sammā-samādhī-maggaṅga*). This factor can also be taken as including preliminary, access, and full concentration; and the high attainments (*sammā-patti*) of the *jhānas* for those who work on developing calm (*samatha*) and purification of the mind (*citta-vissudhi*). Also included is the concentration associated with the purification of wisdom and which accompanies insight knowledge (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*), knowledge of the Paths and Fruition States of the four stages of Awakening (*magga-ñāṇa*

¹Bhikkhu Nyanatiloka, in his *Buddhist Dictionary* (Table II, under “lofty formations”), translates *kāya* by “spiritual group.” We have adopted Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli’s translation (“mental body,” see *Path of Purification*, p. 880, Table II [xvi]).

and *phala-ñāṇa*). These are known as concentration on emptiness (*suññatā-samādhi*), concentration on the signless (*animitta-samādhi*), and concentration free from all longings (*appaṇihita-samādhi*).¹

Finally, there is the factor of Awakening of equanimity. As long as one's meditation lacks method and is not yet systematic, a lot of mental and physical effort has to be made. Eventually the work will be methodical and systematic and no special effort will have to be made. Then one can experience the freedom of perfect balance of mind (*tatra-majjhataṭṭatā-cetasika*), one of the mental concomitants.²

Once the meditator establishes these seven factors of Awakening in himself in a balanced way, he too will enjoy the pleasure surpassing human pleasures and acquire the joy and gladness that comes when one realizes Nibbāna, the deathless. Ven. Ledi Sayadaw says that the pleasure that comes through insight could be divided into 256 parts, and still each part would exceed the mundane joys and pleasure of kings over humans, *devas*, or *brahmās*. As the Buddha said:

Sabba-rasaṃ dhamma-raso jināti.

The flavour of the Dhamma exceeds all other flavours.

Dhammapada, v. 354

We have given elsewhere the stories of how simply hearing the recitation of these seven characteristics can cure grave illnesses. Ven. Ledi Sayadaw points out, however, that diseases

¹See the *Path of Purification*, Chapter 1, ¶140, n°s 36, 37, 38.

²*Path of Purification*, p. 880, Table II, n° xxi, translated as "specific neutrality."

and ailments can be cured only if the hearer is fully aware of the meaning and if strong, clear faith (*saddhā*) arises.

When these seven characteristics of Awakening are acquired in a balanced way, the meditator will not have any deficiency in his Contemplation of the body. There will be no deficiency in his perception of impermanence (*anicca*) and lack of permanent self (*anattā*). He will not lack in mental and physical energy. With his mind at rest concerning the first three factors, he experiences the joy of the knowledge that he now perceives the light of Nibbāna which has never appeared to him in the endless rounds of birth in the past—not even in his dreams. Thus, his attention on the subject of meditation becomes extremely calm and steady and there arises Equanimity (*upekkhā*) which is free from the anxieties and efforts needed for developing mindfulness, the perception of *anicca* and *anattā* in the investigation of mental states, and the arousal of energy.

What we have just said applies to the Factors of Awakening when they are in unison with one another and their respective functions are especially clear. This is something all meditators can look forward to and towards which they should work. For those who have not reached such high development, we can consider the Awakening Factors as they apply in lower stages. As soon as we started working on keeping our attention on our breath we began to develop the Factors of Awakening. The Buddha instructed that the Seven Factors of Awakening should be practised through detachment (*viveka*), through the absence of desire (*virāga*), and through cessation (*nirodha*). Developed

thus, they lead to relinquishing (*vossagga*).¹ Ven. Ledi Sayadaw explains this to mean practising the factors which are dependent on the absence of all kinds of activities and anxiety, of lust and greed or suffering attendant on the round of rebirths, and on the abandoning of the four grounds of attachment (*upadhi*):

- (1) attachment to sensuous pleasures (*kāmūpadhi*),
- (2) attachment to mental defilements (*kilesupadhi*),
- (3) attachment to doing meritorious acts, etc.
(*abhisāṅkārūpadhi*), and
- (4) attachment to the aggregates (*khandūpadhi*)²

If we work as the Buddha said to work, we will not have leanings toward the attainment of birth in happy planes of existence (*bhava-sampatti*) or the attainment of wealth (*bhoga-sampatti*). We will make the attempt to destroy the vast realm of latent belief in a permanent self in this very life.

THE EIGHT PATH FACTORS. This brings us to the eight Path Factors (*maggaṅga*) which dispel such defilements as the belief in a permanent self, thereby enabling one to reach Nibbāna, the end of the suffering of the lower planes of existence (*apāya-dukkha*) and the suffering of continued births (*vaṭṭa-dukkha*). The eight steps of the Path can be divided into three groups:

¹See the *Kindred Sayings* V 51. The terms here are closer to the version given in the *Wheel* (n°s 171–174, p. 108).

²These are given in the Myanmar edition in a footnote (p. 203). In the *Wheel* edition, the four types follow *Psalms of the Brethren*, p. 398, fn. 7, rather than the Myanmar edition.

(A) Wisdom (*paññā*)1. Right View (*sammā-diṭṭhi*)2. Right Thought or Intention (*sammā-saṅkappa*)(B) Virtue (*sīla*)3. Right Speech (*sammā-vācā*)4. Right Action (*sammā-kammanta*)5. Right Livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*)(C) Concentration (*saṃādhi*)6. Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*)7. Right Mindfulness (*sammā-sati*)8. Right Concentration (*sammā-saṃādhi*).

There are times when all eight Path Factors are present together. This is when one reaches the last of the seven stages of Purification. This last stage is the Supramundane Purification by Knowledge and Vision which accompanies the supramundane consciousness associated with attaining one of the Noble Paths or Fruition States.

Up until the moment one attains the first Path of Stream-Winner, the three Path factors coming under the division of virtue are only present in the first of the seven purifications, the mundane purification of virtue. In this first stage, one's actions are virtuous wholesome volitional acts (*sīla-kusala-kamma*) which lead to continued births. Later, when the stage of Ariya is reached, these three Path Factors are present in the form of non-transgression (*avītikkama*) for all one's remaining lives.

The five Path factors in the divisions of wisdom and concentration are present in the five mental purifications that come after purification of virtue. Only in the last purification do all five Path

factors of wisdom and concentration occur together with the three Path factors of virtue.

One may practise virtue because one hopes to experience rebirth in happy planes of existence (*bhava-sampatti*). This is virtue rooted in continued rebirth (*vaṭṭa-nissita*). This type of virtue is not on a high enough level to be included in the Requisites of Awakening. For that, we must have virtue belonging to the fundamentals leading to the highest purity of life (*ādi-brahmacariyaka*), virtue which has as its aim attaining the Noble Paths and Fruition States in this lifetime. If someone makes an effort in hopes that they attain Nibbāna in their next life, then their virtuous deeds will be in the category of the perfection of virtue (*pāramī-sīla*), and this type of virtue tends towards the ending of continued rebirth (*vivaṭṭa-nissita-sīla*).

The eight precepts with right livelihood as the eighth (*ājīvaṭṭhamaka-sīla*), which we discussed in our first talk, are the virtue that must be observed as preparation to destroying the vast kingdom of the tendency towards wrong view (*diṭṭhi-anusaya*). This is the virtue included in right speech, right action, and right livelihood, for this set of precepts puts great emphasis on the various aspects of right speech. These eight precepts also amount to purification of virtue.

For laymen, these eight precepts have two aspects: (1) abstaining from the three types of bad conduct in bodily actions (*kāya-duccarita*), that is, abstaining from taking life, from stealing, and from indulging in improper sexual relations or in taking intoxicants; and (2) abstaining from the four types of bad conduct through (wrong) speech (*vacī-duccarita*), that is, abstaining from telling lies, from setting one person against another, from using rude and rough words, and from frivolous

talk. The eight precepts (including not eating after noontime) and the ten precepts for laymen are simply refinements of the virtue of the eight precepts with right livelihood as the eighth.

For bhikkhus, that virtue is included in the 227 rules in the Discipline (Vinaya). These rules cover both bodily and vocal volitional acts. The other rules given in the *Book of the Discipline* (Vinaya-piṭaka) are refinements.

The purification of virtue is like the soil in which trees grow, and the last six purifications beginning with purification of mind, are like trees growing in that soil of virtue. Even though virtue does not mix with the next five purifications of the mind, it supports them by securing the purity that must precede them. The objects of attention are different for virtue and for the next five purifications of the mind, therefore they do not mix. But when the last purification, which is supramundane, is reached, the objects of attention are the same and operate together with it as co-existent (*saha-jāta*). The eight Path factors can be developed on the mundane level, but when the Noble Path of Stream-Winner is reached, they are developed on the supramundane level.

For meditators who are still developing their purity of virtue on the mundane level, their virtue should be dependent on detachment (*viveka-nissita*) and dependent on the absence of desire (*virāga-nissita-sīla*). The commentary on the *Book of Analysis* (Vibhaṅga) says one should develop right speech, right action, and right livelihood in the same way the seven Factors of Awakening were developed—through detachment, through the absence of desire, and through cessation. Developed thus, they lead to relinquishing.

One of the Path factors of wisdom can be included here in our discussion of developing the factors on the mundane level. Right thought (*sammā-saṅkappa*) is the forerunner of wisdom. In the mental factors, it is called the consciousness concomitant of applied thought (*vitakka cetasika*). In its three subdivisions, it is closely tied to virtue. There are: (1) thoughts of renunciation (*nekkhamma-saṅkappa*), (2) thoughts free from malice (*abyāpāda-saṅkappa*), and (3) thoughts free from cruelty (*avihiṃsa-saṅkappa*).

Thoughts of renunciation are those that look for an escape from the suffering of continued rebirths. They will lead to the energetic practice of the four right efforts which seek escape from unwholesome volitional acts which have arisen in the past and are yet to arise in the future. With thoughts of renunciation one is completely absorbed in thoughts of how to escape, like someone who is in prison or who is attacked by enemy troops or encircled by a forest fire, or like a fish caught in a net or a tank or a trap, or a bird in a cage.

Thoughts free from malice are those that associate with loving kindness in the first absorption state (*mettā-jhāna*). Thoughts free from cruelty are associated with compassion in the first absorption state (*karuṇā-jhāna*). All the other *jhānas* have the thought of renunciation associated with them.

In these *vipassanā* courses we learn to develop pure insight only (*suddha-vipassanā-yānika*) without first developing the *jhānas*. In the first stages we develop purity of virtue through the precepts and mindful body contemplation through *ānāpāna*. At this stage, the three Path factors of concentration—right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration—serve to bring about temporary concentration (*khaṇika-samādhi*). These three Path

factors of concentration fulfil the functions of calm and purification of mind. In observing sensations and appreciating their impermanence (*anicca*), we fulfil the Path factors of wisdom: right thought and right view.

It is essential that meditators work to achieve the supramundane, that they not be content with simply making progress in the mundane. Even if one is reborn in the highest celestial worlds, as long as one is an ordinary person (*puthujjana*), one is liable to rebirth in the lowest hells. Even if one is born as a *brahmā* in the fine-material and non-material *brahmā* planes with all three of the wholesome root conditions (*ti-hetuka*), one is still liable to rebirth in the unhappy planes of existence as such creatures as dogs or pigs with none of the wholesome root conditions (*ahetuka*); that is, non-greed (*alobha*), non-hate (*adosa*), and non-delusion (*amoha*).

If one can attain to at least the stage of Stream-Entry (*sotāpatti*) as one supported by bare insight (*sukkha-vipassaka*), called *Bon-sin-san* in the Myanmar language, then one is like a stream or current (*sota*), and just as streams and rivers flow down to the ocean, one will inevitably progress as a Noble One (*ariya*), never regressing to the stage of ordinary persons (*puthujjana*), and will eventually attain final Nibbāna with no remainder of the aggregates of existence (*anupādisesa-nibbāna*).

At the present time, there are many such persons from the time of Buddha Gotama living in the *deva* abode of the Four Great Kings (*Mahā-rājika-deva-loka*) who protect the world, the *deva* realm of the Thirty-three (*Tāvātimsa-deva-loka*), and the upper *deva* realms. They include the chief woman lay disciple of the Buddha, Mother Visākhā; the lay disciple who was chief in generosity, the treasurer Anāthapiṇḍika; Sakka, the king of the

deva realm of the Thirty-three; the *devas* Cūḷaratha and Mahāratha; the Four Great Kings; and the guardian *devas* of the moon and sun. There is even a *deva* who began on his way to Nibbāna under the Buddha Sumedha, who was the fourteenth Buddha before Gotama. This is the *deva* Anekavaṇṇa.¹ They belong to the class of Stream-Winners who have at the maximum seven more lives in the realms of sense desires—that is, the human world and the six *deva* realms. They are not liable to rebirth in the four realms of suffering below the human world. After seven births in the realms of sense desire (*kāma-loka*), they have an undetermined number of births in the lower *brahmā* realms of the first, second, and third *jhānas*. Finally, they have one rebirth in each of the six *brahmā* realms of the fourth *jhāna*, the Vehapphala-brahma-loka.

THE STREAM OF DHAMMA. The Ariyas never regress. They proceed higher and higher, from one world to the next or from one stage of Awakening to the next, until after many rebirths and many worlds have passed, they reach the highest worlds and the highest status, and attain final Nibbāna. This straight path of ascent is called the Stream of Dhamma (*Dhamma-sota*). This stream can be applied to each of the eight Path factors in their supramundane development.

The stream of right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi-sota*) means that the great kingdom of right view which can perceive the light of the

¹These *sotāpannas* are mentioned in the commentary to the *Kindred Sayings* (see *Kindred Sayings* V 180, fn. 3). See *Vimāna Stories* for Cūḷaratha ("Little Chariot Mansion," pp. 397–412), Mahāratha ("Great Chariot Mansion," pp. 412–436), and Anekavaṇṇa ("Mansion of [the *deva*] of Countless Appearance," pp. 488–494).

Four Noble Truths has been established. It replaces the kingdom of the latent tendency to hold the wrong view that there is a lasting self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*). Right view resembles the rising of the sun after the night is over, when darkness is dispelled and the light is established. In the same way, the great kingdom of light of right view remains established throughout many lives and many world-cycles until final Nibbāna is attained. The light increases and becomes more and more firmly established from one rebirth to another. It also resembles a person blind from birth due to cataracts on both eyes. Once the cataracts are cured by using the right medicine, the person can see the earth, mountains, sky, sun, moon, and stars, etc. He will be able to see for the rest of his life. Similarly, the Noble Stream-Winner can see *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anattā*—the three characteristics (*ti-lakkhaṇa*)—and he can see the Four Noble Truths. Noble Ones can see these at will. This is how the Path factor of right view is established.

Sammā-diṭṭhassa sammā-saṅkappo pahoti. (“When right view is established, right thought progresses.”)¹ When right view is established, the intention and effort to escape from mundane suffering and to preserve others from destruction and suffering becomes established and thrives from one birth to another until final Nibbāna is attained. This is right thought.

Sammā-saṅkappassa sammā-vācā pahoti. (“When right thought is established, right speech progresses.”) With the establishing of the intention and effort to escape from worldly ills and

¹Literally: “Right Thought proceeds from Right View.” Ven. Ledi Sayadaw points out that the commentary explains “proceeds from” as meaning “grows or increases (due to)” (*vaḍḍati*). This, and the following Pāli quotes are from the *sutta* translated in the *Kindred Sayings* V 1f.

to see others live with pleasure and at their ease, there will be speech free from the four wrong verbal actions: lying, slander, harsh speech, and frivolous talk. Right speech will be progressively established.

Sammā-vācassa sammā-kammanto pahoti. (“When right speech is established, right action progresses.”) When one’s speech is free of the four kinds of wrong speech, actions free from wrong physical action will appear and be progressively established. This means refraining from killing, stealing and sensual abuse such as sexual misconduct or taking intoxicants.

Sammā-kammantassa sammā-ājīvo pahoti. (“When right action is established, right livelihood progresses.”) When one’s views, intentions, speech, and actions become pure, then one’s livelihood becomes pure as well, and one is permanently free of low and base forms of livelihood.

Sammā-ājīvassa sammā-vāyamo pahoti. (“When right livelihood is established, right effort progresses.”) Energy and effort which is free from wrong behaviour and wrong livelihood becomes permanently established when one’s views, intentions, speech, actions, and livelihood become pure.

Sammā-vāyāmassa sammā-sati pahoti. (“When right effort is established, right mindfulness progresses.”) As a result of energy and effort being correctly exerted, the Path factor of right mindfulness, which has its roots in virtue, concentration, and wisdom, is established more and more from one birth to the next.

Sammā-satissa sammā-samādhi pahoti. (“When right mindfulness is established, right concentration progresses.”) In the same way, right concentration, which has the same roots, and which exercises great control over the mind, becomes established.

THE HERITAGE OF THE BUDDHA'S DISPENSATION. Ven. Ledi Sayadaw concludes his book with a discussion of the heritage of the Buddha's Dispensation, the Buddha-Sāsana. This heritage is passed on just as an inheritance is passed from parents to children or other legitimate heirs. There are two kinds of inheritance: (1) the material inheritance (*āmisa-dāyāda*) and (2) the inheritance of the Teachings (*Dhamma-dāyāda*).

The material inheritance can be received only by members of the Saṅgha: *bhikkhus* (monks), *bhikkhunīs* (nuns), *sāmaṇeras* (male novices), *sāmaṇerīs* (female novices), and *sikkhamānās* (female trainees). These five types of individuals are called "fellow workers or colleagues within the Sāsana." They can receive the material gifts of the four requisites: alms food, robes, dwelling places, and medicine.

The inheritance of the Teachings can be received by the five groups within the Saṅgha and by *upāsakas* and *upāsikās*—that is, laymen and laywomen. These two categories include men, *devas* and *brahmās* who are not in the Saṅgha but who are established in the Triple Refuge of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha.

The inheritance of the Teachings includes the mundane inheritance (*lokiya*) and the supramundane inheritance (*lokutara*). The mundane inheritance is unstable (*ariyata*) and is subject to future rebirths (*vaṭṭa-nissita*). Included in it are the three mundane trainings (*lokiya-sikkhā*) of virtue (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*); the first six of the seven stages of purification practised on the mundane level (*lokiya-visuddhi*); and the Thirty-Seven Requisites of Awakening which are associated with the mundane purifications.

This unstable, mundane heritage gives rise to the three types of cycles of rebirth: (1) the cycles of rebirth through defilements (*kilesa-vaṭṭa*), (2) the cycles of rebirth through volitional actions (*kamma-vaṭṭa*), and (3) the cycles of rebirth through the consequence (of volitional actions) (*vipāka-vaṭṭa*). Those who work for future cycles of rebirth are those who practise *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* in order to attain high worldly positions, such as being the advisor of kings, or in order to acquire dignity, power, a large following, or property, or in order to be reborn as highly placed human beings or *devas*.

The supramundane inheritance is stable (*niyata*) and is based on the ending of future cycles of rebirth (*vivaṭṭa-nissita*). This includes the higher trainings in virtue, concentration and wisdom which are associated with the four Noble Paths and the four Noble Fruition States. It includes the seventh Purification by Knowledge and Vision (*ñāṇa-dassana-visuddhi*) and the supramundane level of the Thirty-Seven Requisites of Awakening. The ending of future cycles of rebirth means attaining Nibbāna. So, practising *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* in order to end the three types of cycles of rebirth is the supramundane Dhamma heritage.

One may practice wholesome volitional actions (*kusala-kamma*) with the aim of ultimately reaching Nibbāna, but also desiring worldly benefits and pleasant rebirths in the interim between the present and the time Nibbāna will be attained. This is practice based on a twofold aim (*ubhaya-nissita*) and includes both future cycles of rebirth and the ending of the cycles. This twofold category is not specifically mentioned in the Pāli texts, however. So we can say that those who aim more for results within the cycles are performing volitional actions resulting in future cycles of rebirth (*vaṭṭa-nissita-kamma*) and those who are

more inclined to attaining Nibbāna are those whose volitional actions result in the ending of future cycles of rebirth (*vivaṭṭa-nissita-kusala-kamma*).

Ven. Ledi Sayadaw gives an illustration of the dangers lying in wait for ordinary people who still have the inclination to believe in a permanent self and who only make efforts giving unstable results. Their mistaken belief is like a very wide and very deep ocean of hot, burning embers. The virtue, concentration, and wisdom that occasionally occur to ordinary people are like drops of water falling on that burning ocean. Just as the ocean will dry up the drops of water, the belief in a controlling self in ordinary people will dry up the results of their virtue, concentration, and wisdom. They have an ulterior motive, so their virtue, concentration, and wisdom are only temporary.

On the other hand, the mundane volitional actions of those who have reached the first stage of Awakening (*sotāpanna*) are stable. They keep the mundane virtue with right livelihood as the eighth precept, their mundane concentration is firmly established on the incomparable qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha, and their mundane wisdom perceives the Four Noble Truths. Such stable *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* are like drops of water falling on the great lake Anotatta where Teaching Buddhas, Paccekka Buddhas, Arahats, and *devas* often go, the lake that is one of the last to dry up at the end of the world. Such *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* will not disappear during many lives and many world-cycles. For all those who have attained one of the four Paths or four Fruition States, there is no possibility of their becoming immoral (*dussīla*), uncontrolled (*asamāhita*), unwise (*duppaññā*) or blinded by folly (*andhabāla*).

Mundane virtue for the five types of fellow workers in the Saṅgha means the rules of discipline found in the Vinaya. Their heritage also includes the many types of virtue given by the Buddha in the first discourse of the *suttas*.¹ The virtue of the discourses (*suttanta-sīla*) for laymen and laywomen means keeping the eight precepts with right livelihood as the eighth and the ten precepts to be observed at times.²

Supramundane virtue is the heritage of all types of individuals when they are able to follow right speech, right action, and right livelihood on the level of the supramundane Eightfold Path. Therefore, on the supramundane level, it is not necessary to draw distinctions between the Saṅgha and laity. Likewise, there is no distinction necessary for concentration and wisdom on both the mundane and supramundane levels.

Laymen and laywomen are heirs of the Sāsana only for their own benefit. The five types of fellow workers in the Saṅgha, however, are heirs for their own and are the heirs who act as the caretakers of the Sāsana heritage, making it possible for the Teachings, including the three collections (Tipiṭika) to last for five thousand years. Because the responsibility of preserving the Sāsana rests on their shoulders, the status of the Saṅgha is much higher than the status of lay people. This is why a layman may

¹See the *All-Embracing Net of Views* 56–65. The Buddha gives a very detailed list of the types of actions he refrains from, including many examples of spectacles, games, types of wrong speech, types of wrong livelihood, etc., not to be indulged in.

²Other types of virtue in the discourses include practices appropriate for those who are scrupulous (*dhūtaṅga-sīla*), virtue as a controlling principle (*indriya-sīla*), and the virtue in regards to the requisites (*paccaya-sammissita-sīla*)—this last one being for members of the Saṅgha.

have been an Ariya for sixty years, yet he still must pay respects to a seven-year-old *sāmaṇera* who is an ordinary person and who has only just been ordained. Bhikkhus preserve the discipline in the Vinaya, so a bhikkhu who is an Arahāt will pay respects to a bhikkhu who is still an ordinary person if that bhikkhu takes precedence because he was ordained only an hour before the Arahāt.

The practice of the (mundane level of the) Teachings (in order to attain the supramundane level of the) Teachings (*Dhammānu-dhamma-paṭipatti*)¹ is the name given to the three trainings, the seven purifications and the Thirty-Seven Requisites of Awakening because they are practices that are in consonance with the nine supramundane states (*lokuttara-dhammā*): the four Paths, the four Fruition States, and Nibbāna. Heirs of the Sāsana of all types who practise these well are said to be individuals who have entered on the good way (*suppaṭipanna*), entered on the straight way (*ujuppaṭipanna*), entered on the true way (*ñāyappaṭipanna*), entered on the proper way (*sāmicippaṭipanna*).²

Even though such persons may still be ordinary persons, they are included among individuals who belong to the training for the good of the path of Stream-Winning (*sotāpatti-maggattha-sekha*). They are called Ariyas who practise the mundane level of the Teachings in order to attain the supramundane level of the

¹We follow a translation along the lines of Childers' *Dictionary of the Pāli Language* (see under *anudhammo*) rather than those suggested in the *Pāli-English Dictionary* (PTS, see under *dhamma*, C-4), as this seems to be the sense given the term by Ven. Ledi Sayadaw.

²See the *Path of Purification*, Chapter VII, ¶83f. for more details on these terms.

Teachings. As they are ordinary persons, they are not Ariyas in the highest sense of the word (*paramattha-ariyas*).¹ Lay people who are permanently confirmed in the precepts with right livelihood as the eighth and in the Triple Gem of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha are endowed in part with the qualities of those who have entered on the good way, the proper way. Laymen working for the supreme goal, who live with a pure mind and pure body, can even be called bhikkhus, as verse 142 of the Dhammapada shows:

*Alaṅkato ce pi samaṇṇ careyya
santo danto niyato brahmacārī,
sabbesu bhūtesu nidhāya daṇḍaṃ
so brāhmaṇo, so samaṇo, sa bhikkhu.*

Even though a person is (richly) adorned, if he conducts himself in a balanced way, is calm, controlled, restrained, and leads a pure life, if he has laid down arms against any living being whatsoever: he is a recluse, he is a brahman, he is a bhikkhu.

¹Ven. Ledi Sayadaw quotes a sentence from the Saṃyutta-nikāya in support of this, but we have not been able to locate this passage in the Pali Text Society edition. In the Myanmar edition, the sentence is: *Iminā ariyena sīlakkandena samannāgato hoti*. ("He is possessed of this Noble group of virtue.") In the PTS ed., a phrase with the same essential meaning is found at Saṃyutta-nikāya I 99: *Asekkhena sīlakkhandena ...* (cf. *Kindred Sayings* I 124). *Asekkha* is a term often used to refer to those who have attained the Fruition State of Arahatsip ("non-trainer," i.e., gone beyond training) as distinct from *sekkha* ("trainer"), which refers to Ariyas from *sotāpannas* up through those who have attained the Path of Arahatsip.

When one takes refuge in the Saṅgha or enumerates the qualities of the Saṅgha, he should understand this to mean bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs who are at least virtuous and morally good ordinary persons (*sīlavanta kalyāṇa puthujjana*). In matters concerning the whole discipline of the Vinaya, only fully ordained bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs (*upasampanna saṅgha*) are included.

The Buddha told the bhikkhus that they should become heirs of the Teachings and not heirs to material things. He told them that out of compassion (*anukampā*) for them, he asked himself how they could become heirs of the Dhamma rather than heirs of material goods.¹ Material goods (*āmisa*) include the four requisites (*paccayāmisa*), worldly honour and possessions (*lokāmisa*), and future rebirths in good circumstances (*vaṭṭāmisa*). The Buddha was concerned that the Saṅgha not be overwhelmed by these three sorts of material gain. There is always the danger that they will separate a person from the Dhamma heritage. So, material inheritance is a bad inheritance. The Dhamma inheritance of the Thirty-Seven Requisites of Awakening is a good inheritance.

The Buddha spoke highly of the inheritance of the four requisites when they were used with great restraint and in a way that is consistent with remaining detached from material possessions.² There are exceptions to such ascetic living made by the

¹*Middle Length Sayings* I (third discourse, Dhammadāyāda-sutta).

²These include eating only food scraps (*piṇḍayālopa*), wearing only robes made from rags found on dust heaps (*paṃsukūla*), living apart at the foot of a tree (*rukkha-mūla*), and using ammonia for medicine (*pūtimutta*). See the *Book of the Discipline* IV 75.

Buddha. This is because the Teachings of the Buddha are preserved in three ways:

- (1) through the preservation of the texts (*pariyatti-sāsana*),
- (2) through practising the Teachings (*paṭipatti*), and
- (3) through comprehending the Teachings (*paṭivedha*).

Only when the texts of the Teachings are firmly established can the other two exist. The burden of preserving the texts for five thousand years is very great, as we are in a waning world-cycle when the life expectancy for humans is on the decline. As a result, the physical and mental strength of the members of the Saṅgha are declining also. The Buddha foresaw that it would not be possible to preserve the texts if the bhikkhus had to live only at the foot of trees.

Another reason for allowing extra material possessions for the Saṅgha was that people whose perfections (*pāramī*) are not mature can learn the texts, practise generosity, observe the moral precepts, provide the requisites for the Saṅgha, and in this way escape the lower realms of suffering in their next birth and obtain release from suffering in the next Buddha-Sāsana.

But we must bear in mind that the Buddha was careful to instruct all who used more than bare essentials of material goods to maintain purity through reviewing (*pacca-vekkhana-suddhi*); that is, to review the true nature of the material goods received and used. This was to avoid being overcome by wrong view when the blemishes of material possessions would no longer be seen, and to avoid allowing such a wrong view to last throughout youth, middle age, and old age. Otherwise, one will go to the lower realms of suffering.

*Ayasā va malam samuṭṭhitam
 tatutṭhāya tam eva khādati,
 Evaṃ atidhonacārinam sāni
 kammāni nayanti duggatiṃ.*

Just as the stain (of rust) which springs up on iron is produced from it and devours it, so too, he who indulges himself too much in the four requisites, through his own volitional actions is led to the lower realms of misery.

Dhammapada, v. 240

THE STORY OF ELDER TISSA. This verse from the Dhammapada was spoken by the Buddha in reference to a bhikkhu named Elder Tissa. Elder Tissa became attached to one of his robes, and due to his attachment, he was reborn as a louse living in the robe. The other bhikkhus started to divide the robe among the Saṅgha, but the louse ran up and down crying, "The bhikkhus are stealing my property!" The Buddha was able to hear the louse and told the bhikkhus to put the robe to one side for eight days, so that the louse could die and be reborn in a *deva* realm. Otherwise, Tissa would have held a grudge against the bhikkhus and been reborn in one of the lower realms. Now Elder Tissa was a bhikkhu who had scrupulously followed the 227 rules of the Vinaya. The robe he was attached to had been lawfully received. So we can see how dangerous craving is. We can well imagine the dangers lying in wait for laymen who keep only five precepts as they go about their daily lives acquiring property due to their lust and greed.

GOOD AND BAD HEIRS. Ven. Ledi Sayadaw gives an illustration of the good and bad inheritance in the Buddha-Sāsana and those

who are good and bad heirs. It is like a wealthy man who buries most of his treasures in the ground and keeps only part for immediate use. When he dies, he leaves six sons to share equally in his wealth. They will have to dig the buried treasure up in order to inherit it. One son is greedy for all his inheritance and digs up his share of the treasure. One son is very energetic, one is very attached to wealth, and one is clever and ingenious, and they all dig up their shares. A fifth son lacks a strong desire and thinks he has enough with his ready cash inheritance. The last son is a spendthrift and soon spends his ready cash and does not have enough left to buy a spade to dig up the rest. He soon turns to bad ways and is eventually banished from his native town.

In this illustration, the Buddha resembles the wealthy father. The purity of virtue and the texts of the Teachings of the Buddha are like the wealth ready for immediate use. The various buried treasures are like the temporary mental purification gained through the *jhāna* states and psychic powers, the four types of mundane purity of wisdom, and the supramundane purity of Knowledge and Vision. The Saṅgha and laymen resemble the six heirs. The first four sons are like those who develop one of the four Bases of Success (*iddhipāda*). Those who are strong in the desire for liberation (*chanda*) are like the greedy son; those who are strong in the base of effort (*virīya*) are like the energetic son; those whose thoughts are directed to liberation (*citta*) are like the heir with strong attachment; and those who develop the basis of investigation (*vimamsā*) are like the clever heir. None of these heirs of the Buddha are content with the minor attainments of the Sāsana. They will not rest until they have acquired the higher attainments.

People who possess none of the Bases of Success or who only possess them to an inferior degree resemble the heir who was easily satisfied. They do not even imagine that they can aspire to the higher attainments. They are reluctant to make an effort if it means enduring privations. They tend to dismiss such efforts as impossible. And as their volition is weak, they cannot keep their minds fixed on such work. They change their minds whenever they listen to various theories and explanations. They lack wisdom and so reject such work as beyond their capabilities. This is why the Buddha urged everyone to develop the Bases of Success so that such new thoughts and desires to make right efforts could arise.

People who are deficient in moral conduct are like the last son. Those who are not established in the Triple Gem and the minimum moral precepts do not possess the qualities of the laymen or laywomen who are only heirs of the Sāsana. Bhikkhus and *sāmaṇeras* who are guilty of the grave offenses entailing dismissal from the Saṅgha are no longer heirs either. If laymen can establish themselves in the precepts with right livelihood as the eighth, they can immediately become heirs of the Sāsana.

Just as the material heritage is unstable and the heritage of the Teachings is stable, heirs can be stable or unstable heirs, depending on the progress they have made in practising the Teachings.

Those who have not even once gained the knowledge of impermanence (*anicca-ñāṇa*) and the knowledge of lack of self (*anattā-ñāṇa*) are unstable heirs. They may be disciples and heirs of the Omniscient (*sabbaññuta*) Buddha today but then may become disciples and heirs of another teacher tomorrow. We can see such people in the world today. How much easier it will be for them to change in a future life! This is why it is said in the

commentaries that those who are ordinary persons are “those who look at the faces of many teachers.”¹ Ven. Ledi Sayadaw points out that ordinary persons have changed teachers on innumerable occasions in their past lives. They have taken refuge in a Buddha very seldom. They have taken refuge in many other things: Brahmā, Sakka, various *devas*, the sun, the moon, planets, spirits of the earth, or in ogres. And they did so as if such “refuges” were almighty.

FALSE TEACHERS. There are many false teachers in the world. Ordinary people have taken refuge in these false teachers many times. The more they do so, the more they sink in the lower realms including the hells. If they continue, from this life on, to drift in future rebirths attached to a belief in a permanent self, they will continue to turn to false teachers. Their state is truly fearsome, terrible, and disagreeable. Every time an ordinary person changes his teacher and refuge, he changes in the doctrines and principles he depends on for guidance. They have very rarely adopted and depended on right views. On very many occasions they have followed wrong views and thus sink deeper and deeper in the lower realms.

Seeking refuge in wrong protectors and teachers is one of the greatest errors and leads to great harm. This is because seeking refuge in wrong teachers leads to wrong moral principles and practices and makes it difficult to achieve rebirth as a human being.

¹Saddhammappakāsinī, p. 445 (*Puthu-sattārāṇaṃ mukha-ullokakā ti puthu-jjanā* ...). We were not able to find the exact quotation given by Ven. Ledi Sayadaw, but the meaning here is the same. The Myanmar edition of the commentary may differ from that of the Pali Text Society.

STABLE HEIRS. Stable heirs of the Sāsana are those who perceive *anicca* and *anattā* in themselves, thus freeing themselves from the wrong view of a permanent self. They are not susceptible to approaching and seeking refuge in erroneous teachers throughout their future rebirths. They are the true children of the Omniscient Buddha throughout all future lives. They are members of the *Bon-sin-san* family, and though they pass through many rebirths and many world-cycles, their belief in the unbounded, incomparable qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha becomes clearer and brighter from one rebirth to another. They continue to wander in future births as belonging to the supramundane, enjoying the joys and pleasures of humans, *devas*, and *brahmās*, but no longer susceptible to changing teachers and refuges in those lives. They have become beings who belong to those who attain Nibbāna with only the substratum of continued existence left (*sa-upādi-sesa-nibbāna*) and who will inevitably reach Nibbāna with no substratum of continued existence (*anupādi-sesa-nibbāna*) after lives in which they enjoy the joys and pleasures of the *Bon-sin-san*.

All wise humans, *devas*, and *brahmās* wish to become stable heirs. For this, they must perform many acts of generosity (*dāna*), many virtuous actions (*sīla*), and must practice mental development (*bhāvanā*) to a high degree, having established the wish that these acts may lead to encountering the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. Everyone who follows courses such as these has performed such acts in the past. Now is the time for them to work for results. Now is the time to work for the stage given in the Abhidhamma in the *Designation of Human Types*: "One becomes a *sotāpanna* after destroying the three (lower) fetters. (Such a person) is assured of states which are not in the

realms of suffering and of proceeding towards Awakening.”¹ The three lower fetters are wrong belief in a permanent self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), sceptical doubt (*vicikacchā*), and the belief that release can come through rites and rituals (*śīlabbata-parāmāsa*). The essential one of these three is the fetter of believing in a permanent self.

Everyone should follow the example of those who have worked in this way. They have not practised generosity, virtue, and mental development in hopes of achieving happy rebirths (*bhava-sampatti*), happiness through wealth (*bhoga-sampatti*) or happiness through being rulers (*issariya-sampatti*). They have done their acts with the aspiration to become human beings, to encounter a Buddha, and to attain release from worldly suffering through Path Knowledge, Fruition Knowledge, through Nibbāna.

Today, the tendency towards the bad heritages of craving for material requisites, worldly goods, and future rebirth in pleasant worlds is very strong. Men and women of today do not like to hear about the good things of the noble tradition (*ariya-vamsa-dhammā*) which include being easily satisfied with one’s food, clothes, and dwelling place,² and deriving joy and pleasure in meditation (*bhāvanā*). They are said to be the good things of the noble tradition because Buddhas, disciples of Buddhas, and heirs of Buddhas should not release their hold on them.

This is a reminder to those persons who possess wisdom.

¹Page 23, ¶37.

²Strictly speaking, this refers to the alms food, robes, and dwellings of bhikkhus, and is given as such by Ven. Ledi Sayadaw. The wording we have used is to suggest the extension of this mental attitude to laymen.

As for those who are deficient in wisdom, then the performance of many good and meritorious acts must be praised as good.

We can say that you who have come to do a *vipassanā* course are not deficient in wisdom. So you should establish yourselves in the precepts with right livelihood as the eighth, establish mindfulness of the body through *ānāpāna*, and strive for insight into the changing nature of the sensations of the body. May your diligent practice lead to your becoming a stable heir of Gotama Buddha, and may you achieve the status of a *Bon-sin-san sotāpanna*—one who will be reborn in one higher realm after the other, from the *deva* worlds up to the Brahmā realms.

*Te jhāyino sātatikā niccam daḷha-parakkamā
Phusanti dhīrā nibbānaṃ yogakkhemaṃ anuttaraṃ.*

Those who are wise, persevering in contemplation, continuously making a strong effort, they attain Nibbāna, the unsurpassed calm free from striving.

Dhammapada, v. 23

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